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October '94

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**Aaron  
Comess**

**Bob Moses**

Highlights Of MD's  
Drum Festival '94

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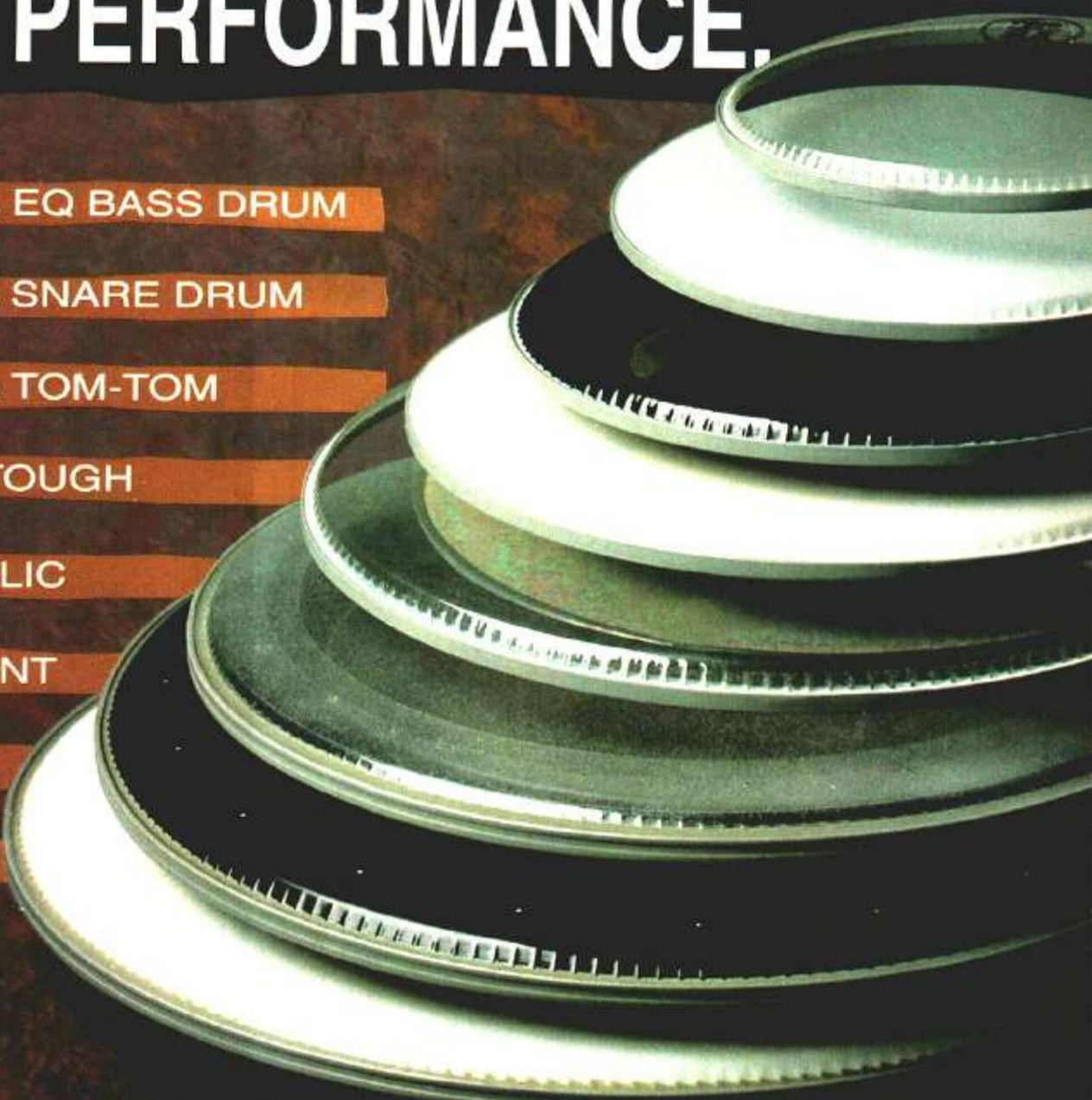
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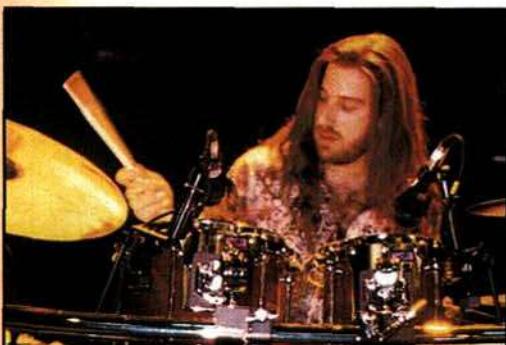
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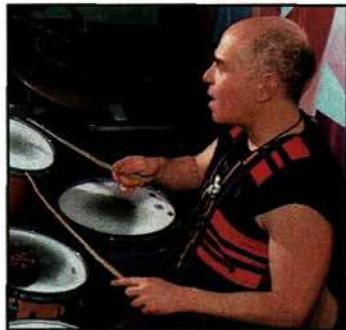


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Album number two sees Spin Doctors drummer Aaron Comess laying down that slippery funky thing yet again. Not that Aaron has cut down on his extracurricular jazz work. Does this guy ever stop?

• *Teri Saccone*

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### BOB MOSES

The eccentric but unarguably gifted drummer who powered the first jazz-rock band is still breaking barriers. With a brand-new album and ever-probing style, Bob Moses explains why his "Simul-Circular Loopology" might be too dangerous in live doses.

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Where should we start? Simon Phillips? Perhaps "J.R." Robinson? Say, Rod Morgenstein? How about Marvin "Smitty" Smith...or David Garibaldi...maybe Chad Smith, Clayton Cameron, or Matt Sorum.... Two days, one stage, a couple thousand drummers, mega-prizes: No matter how you slice it, it's the mother of all drum shows, and we've got the photos to prove it!

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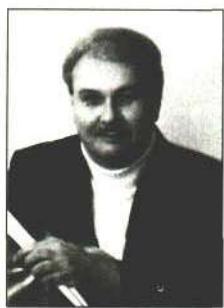
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A Look At  
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**BY RICK VAN HORN**



# A Note-Able Advance



In a 1982 *Editor's Overview*, I suggested how nice it might be to have one standard notational system for drumset. Book authors, arrangers, composers, and copyists have always used a vast array of signs and symbols to indicate multiple toms, double bass, various cymbals, rimshots, hi-hat strokes, etc. One need only glance at a random selection of drum methods, percussion ensemble literature, or the drum parts to stock arrangements for ample evidence. Unfortunately, nothing came of the suggestion back in '82. But today I believe we're finally headed in the right direction, thanks to the efforts of percussionist/educator/author Dr. Norman Weinberg.

Rather than create a totally new notational system from scratch, after massive research, Norm has carefully refined and clarified the current, most common methods in the hopes that those who write for drumset in the future will adopt his recommendations. The Percussive Arts Society has already adopted the system for all future PAS publications.

In a 700-page research report, Weinberg points out, "The wide variety of procedures in current drumset notation can cause frustration for novices and experienced players alike. No other instrument asks a musician to work within such a disorganized and ever-changing notational system." Obviously, if everyone who writes for our instrument would adopt the Weinberg system, many of the ambiguities

inherent in current drumset notation would be alleviated.

You'll probably note in the key below that the notation system *Modern Drummer* has used in the past is not very different from what's been proposed. However, there are certain nuances that we'll conform to more closely in future issues. Though the basic outline of the Weinberg system is presented here, Norm's complete study includes numerous other recommendations and guidelines. For a detailed summary, you can write to Norman Weinberg through the Percussive Arts Society, P.O. Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502.

I'm happy to say that *MD* is officially adopting the Weinberg system. I'd like to suggest that individuals planning to submit material to *MD* in the future adhere to the system as closely as possible. Hopefully other authors, arrangers, and composers will follow our lead. And if everyone cooperates, we may finally end up with one universally accepted system—and that would be an extremely important accomplishment after all these years.

# MODERN DRUMMER®

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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**MODERN DRUMMER** magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly by MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc., 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Second-Class Postage paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1994 by MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

**EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:** MODERN DRUMMER Publications, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel.: (201) 239-4140.

**MODERN DRUMMER** welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**MUSIC DEALERS:** Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer, Dealer Service, P.O. Box 389, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Tel.: (800) 334-DRUM or (815) 734-1214.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** \$29.95 per year; \$51.95, two years. Single copies \$3.95.

**SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE:** Modern Drummer, P.O. Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Toll Free Tel: (800) 551-3786.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Modern Drummer, P.O. Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

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## SON OF THE RETURN OF THE DAVE GROHL CONTROVERSY

*Editor's note: Letters in the June and July Readers' Platform departments criticized MD for featuring Nirvana's Dave Grohl on the March cover. The response we've received to those letters has been unlike anything we've seen in the history of the magazine. Literally hundreds of readers have written—not only to defend the choice of Dave Grohl specifically, but to overwhelmingly support MD's policy regarding the choice of artists to be featured in the magazine.*

*It would be impossible to run all the letters we received—even in excerpted form. However, we did wish to acknowledge this unprecedented reader support. With that in mind, we present below one letter that effectively and articulately sums up the sentiment expressed by those who were moved to write to us. (And with this letter, we conclude our coverage of this controversy.)*

I've been reading and enjoying your magazine for over ten years and I've found it to be an invaluable tool for keeping me in touch with what's happening in the world of drumming and music. Over the years, I have seen letters to your magazine criticizing your choice of cover and other feature artists—the latest being the controversy over Dave Grohl of Nirvana. I feel compelled to write because these complaints are mis-directed.

The role of your magazine is to get access to artists and let them be themselves so that the readers can benefit from knowing them better. The benefit can be either positive (like finding valuable advice or a revealing perspective) or negative (like getting confirmation about why you don't like that player). Either way, the exposure can be an education if it's approached that way. Therefore, any player that people are listening to deserves to be covered for the sake of any other player who might benefit by the interview. Now, there are very few of us who like everybody, but if somebody else is listening (to Dave Grohl, for example), then your mag-

azine should cover them.

Personally, I have made a habit of reading every feature article, even those on players who I am not that interested in. (After all, I paid for the magazine; I'm going to get it all!) And I am happy to report that on many occasions I have benefited a great deal by simply reading all the articles. I hope that we readers might all learn that anyone who's being heard has a place being printed, too.

I think that we should esteem *Modern Drummer*—especially when compared to other "instrumental" magazines that seem to feature the same five or six guys all the time, even if they haven't recorded anything of significance in years! We drummers are actually spoiled with one of the best magazines around. I personally hope that letters written with the intention of bad-mouthing fellow drummers will stay at home in the trash can and that we might spend our time working on improving ourselves and our craft.

John Savolaine  
Westerville, OH

## THANKS FROM NEIL

When I finally arrived home at the end of our *Counterparts* tour—in the usual wrung-out state of exhaustion—and began to sift through the pile of mail on my desk, I was pleasantly surprised to open a package from *Modern Drummer* and find that I had been awarded the "Best Recorded Performance" in the Readers Poll. A weary smile raised this sagging face, and a spark of gratitude lit up these tired old bones!

If anybody thinks I would ever get jaded about such things, let me assure you: no way! As I have said before (and I hope I will say again), it is the ultimate reward to have your work appreciated by other drummers. As I continue my own musical odyssey, working on technique and structure and applying them to each other, it thrills me no end that I continue to find an audience out there that is discriminating and appreciative—and especially an audience of drummers.

So my sincere gratitude to all of you for this honor. And indeed, rather than making me feel complacent or even satisfied about my past work, it serves to inspire me toward the challenges of the future—like those lines from Robert Frost, which have always moved me: "For I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep." Thank you all very much.

Neil Peart  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## FESTIVAL WEEKEND '94

Any time someone talks about a multi-artist drum event, chills go up and down my spine. These events are typically unorganized, unprofessional, and ultimately unproductive. *Modern Drummer*? Festival Weekend was a true pleasure. Thanks to your fine organization, the Festival was not only enjoyable, but was also very productive. I realize that this event is a tremendous amount of hard work for everyone at *Modern Drummer*, and I was very proud to have Mapex associated with it. Thanks for being willing to go the extra mile.

Tracy Hoeft  
Sales & Marketing Manager  
Mapex Drums  
Nashville, TN

Thanks for having me on the Festival program, and congratulations on presenting one hell of an event. I had loads of fun playing—what a great audience!—and a great time watching and hanging for all the other clinics. Thanks also for the hospitality both during and after the show.

Ed Uribe  
Cresskill, NJ

I accompanied my teenage son to the Festival on Saturday. I was very impressed with the professional, first-class way this event was run. The schedule was strictly adhered to, coordination of events ran smoothly, the prizes were fabulous (even though we didn't win), and everyone was friendly and helpful. There was such a diversity of talent and style that it was

continued on page 50

## The heat's on the street...

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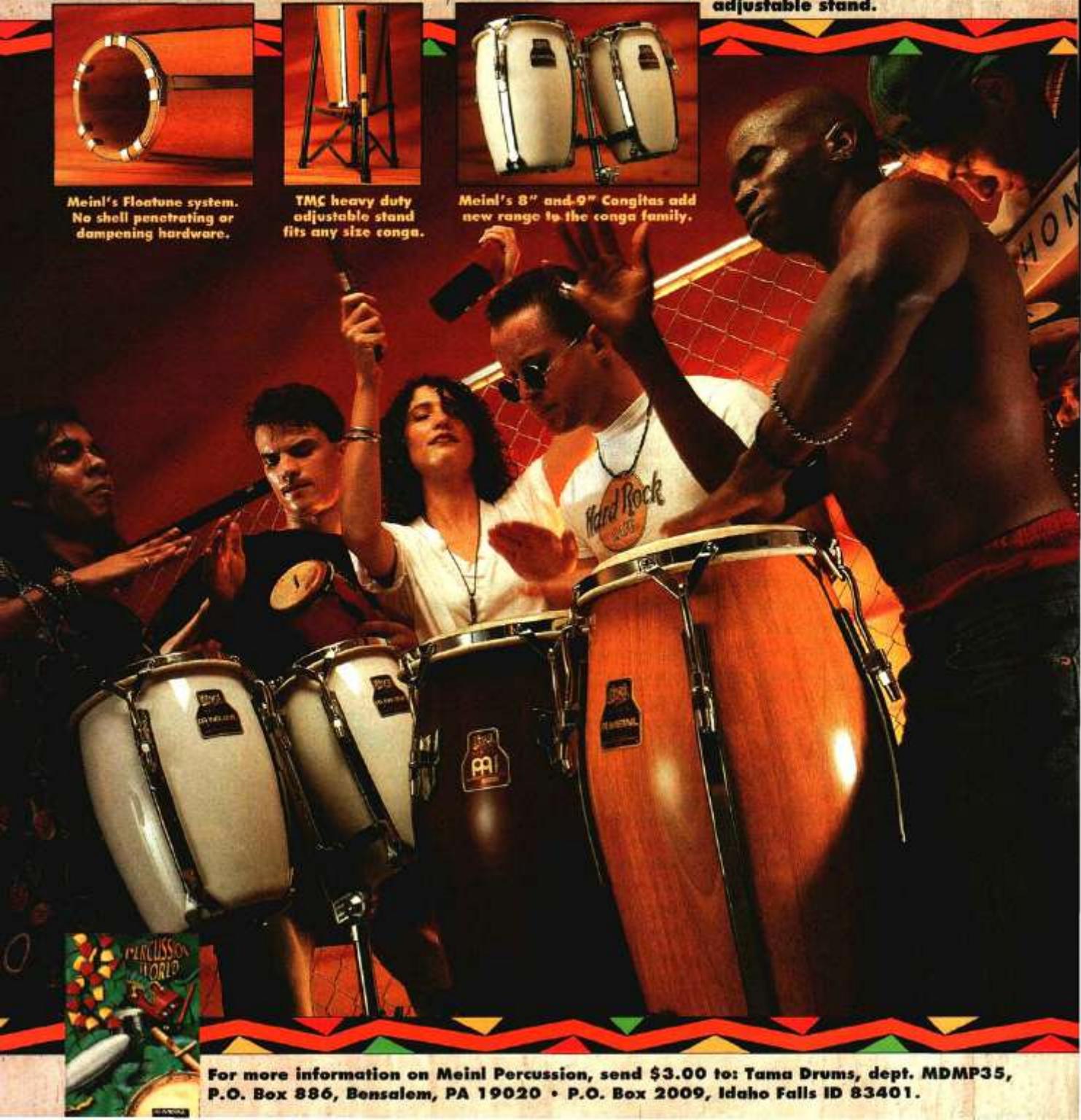


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## Bill Bruford

Bill Bruford took the Buddy Rich band to a place its never been before. "It was definitely a sense of tires squealing on pavement," quips Bruford on his contribution to what might possibly turn out to be one of the most important drum records ever made. The project in question is the Neil Peart-produced album featuring the Buddy Rich band performing with many of today's top drummers, due for release this fall. (MD will be covering this event in more detail in a future issue.)

Bill recorded a tune from the BR book ("Willowcrest"), but then threw the band a major-league curve by having them play one of *his* compositions, the Polyrhythmic "Lingo." According to Bill, "During the first ten minutes of rehearsal the band was struggling. They could have easily killed the tune and said, 'Forget it.' But they gave it their very best shot, worked with me on it, and three hours later it was a take."

Bill says that his half day spent with the band was most enjoyable. "It was thrilling

to play with that band. The sound of all those horns combining with my drums and cymbals gave off such a powerful feeling—lost in the roar, if you will. I would have paid the price of admission."

In other Bruford news, Bill's band, Earthworks, recently released its finest record to date, *Stamping Ground*. The disc reveals the utter fearlessness of the quartet: It's a live recording showing a band blissfully playing in the extreme. "I feel this disc shows just how interactive we were," Bill proclaims. "There was a point around our second record [*Dig*] where I was feeling pressured by our American label to smooth out the music. One might ask, 'Bill, after twenty-five years you still have to listen to this shit from record companies?' And, in fact, I do. But by the time we got to the concerts that came to be *Stamping Ground* we just said to ourselves, 'Let's wail.' That's why this new disc is a bit more adventurous."

Unfortunately *Stamping Ground* will be the swan song for Earthworks, as Bill is

about to re-join one of his most famous musical outlets. "King Crimson is back, and I think people will be a bit surprised at the music we're coming up with," Bill reports. The band features the '80s line-up—Robert Fripp and Adrian Belew on guitars, Tony Levin on stick, Bruford on drums—plus two new members, Trey Gunn on stick and L.A. studio veteran Pat Mastellotto on drums. What, *two* drummers? "Yes, something different," says Bill. "Pat is a very steady rock drummer who is happy to lay down a good beat, allowing me to commit my atrocities. He'll have everyone tapping their toes, and I'll be busy trying to spoil everything!"

A new Crimson disc will be available early next year with a world tour to follow. According to Bill, "The music's insanely dense—very powerful, noisy, and dark. Not only do you have to own a black T-shirt to like this music, you have to be wearing one when you listen."

• William F. Miller

## David Garibaldi

Last year David Garibaldi did a series of three videos for DCI. Two are already out, with the third being released this fall. "We covered three main areas—funk, world music, and jazz," explains Garibaldi, who has been playing around the Bay area in a variety of bands, including his percussion trio, Talking Drums. The trio features David on kit drums with Michael Spiro and Jesus Diaz on hand drums.

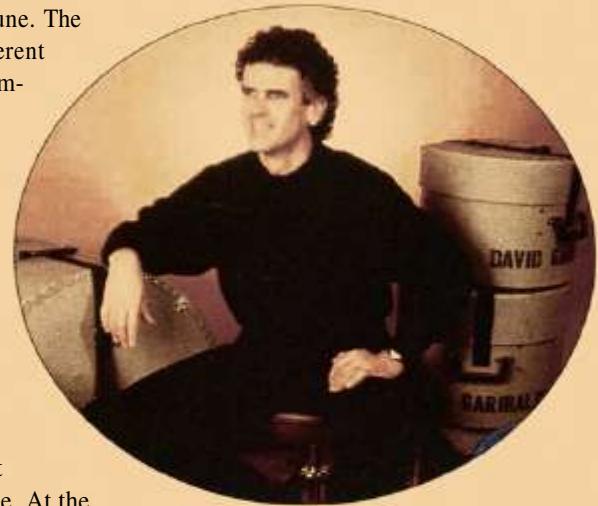
"We play original pieces based on traditional Afro-Cuban music forms. There's a wealth of folkloric material out there that's really cool. It shows a lot about the melodic side of drumming. The compositions are nice, and they showcase everyone's abilities real well. It's a great group concept."

The videos, David says, are very representative of where he is right now. "The theme of the two band videos is how to

build grooves in a particular tune. The percussion video is really different because it's a percussion ensemble based upon Afro-Cuban type playing and it delves into that more folkloric side of Cuban music, which we don't hear a lot about."

In addition to all that, David can be heard on new records by keyboardist Peter Horvath and Mickey Hart. "I did twelve songs on Mickey Hart's album, although I don't know what they're going to use. At the point I was on it, it was just drum sequences. Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain, and Airoto were on it as well. It was really cool."

Garibaldi is also one of the featured



drummers on the Neil Peart/Buddy Rich band album due out this fall. Also, David is currently working on his own record.

• Robyn Flans



## Dave Mancini

Although Dave Mancini recently relocated from New York to southwest Florida, he hasn't had much time to enjoy the beautiful gulf-coast environment. "I'm out of town ninety percent of the time," says Dave. "I'll have maybe ten days off between April and July."

A Rochester native, Dave is a veteran of Chuck Mangione, Maynard Ferguson, the Rochester Philharmonic, and a long roster of jazz greats. His current activities include a busy schedule of symphony concerts with Doc Severinsen. Explains Dave, "Doc carries a rhythm section for his symphony gigs [currently Biff Hannon on piano and Chris Clark on bass]. We play a

mixture of classical and jazz. Sometimes Doc appears as a guest soloist; other times he also conducts."

Dave's other activities include touring with writer/arranger/trumpeter Jeff Tyzik, who produced the *Tonight Show* band's albums, and recent concert appearances with jazz legend Ira Sullivan. Dave also performed his piece "Suite For Solo Drumset And Percussion Ensemble" at last year's Oklahoma State Percussive Arts Society Day Of Percussion, and he presented the first clinic at PAS's new Lawton, Oklahoma headquarters.

Dave also remains active in education. His book, *Drum Set Fundamentals*, has

been widely praised, and he appears at high schools and colleges across the country in clinics co-sponsored by Yamaha, Zildjian, and Vic Firth. "This is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. I love working with young people. I just received a letter from Tim Ishi, director of jazz studies at Texas Wesleyan University in Ft. Worth, where I did a clinic in April. The students wrote comments like 'Dave inspired our confidence' and 'Dave became our friend.' What could be more rewarding than that?"

• Ron Hefner

## Ray Farrugia

Canadian band Junkhouse has been described as a "blend of swampified boogie, punkabilly, and power booze," but drummer Ray Farrugia—one of the band's two founding members—steers clear of labels. "People are having a hard time fitting us into a category," he says. "If you listen to the CD it's hard to classify what this actually is. It's just cool music that we enjoy playing.

"I can play punk, country, rock 'n' roll—whatever I can feel from the heart I can play. If I don't feel it, I can't do it," explains Farrugia, who was born in Malta, raised briefly in Australia, and then ended up in Ontario, Canada. "I can't read a lick of music, and when someone would tell me that I had to sit behind a book

to be a better musician, I knew that it wasn't right for me. Whether that approach is approved by skilled musicians or not, I don't know. That's just the way I approach things."

The group's debut album, *Strays*, was produced by Malcolm Burn (John Mellencamp, Iggy Pop), who left his imprint of stripped-down percussion. "If you're a drummer who likes to play in the Neil Peart style, you'd have a hard time working with Malcolm, because he's a guy who likes to get it straight-ahead. He stripped my playing down quite a bit, and I feel it was all for the better."

• Teri Saccone

## News...

**Bobby Elliott** is on the road with the Hollies, in the midst of their biggest British tour.

**Victor Indrizzo** has taken over the drum seat (from Ginger Baker) in Masters Of Reality. Their new Epic release is due out shortly. He can also be heard on a record by Samiam.

**Chad Sexton** is on tour with 311.

**Doug Garrison** can be heard on the Iguanas' second release, *Nuevo Boogaloo*. The band will be opening a lot of concert dates for Jimmy Buffett (they're on his label) as

well as doing some of their own dates along the way.

**Jack Irons** is on the road with Eleven.

**Russ McKinnon** has been touring with Tower Of Power most of the year, as well as doing a series of clinics for Remo. Tower is currently in pre-production for a new album.

**Tony Braunagel** has become the house drummer for L.A.'s hip new club House Of Blues.

**Ralph Peterson** recently released his sixth solo album, *Art*. The album is dedicated to

Art Blakey, with whom Ralph was very close.

**Percussionist Kurt**

**Rasmussen** played with drummer **Jon Mattox** on the Young Dubliners' debut album, *Rocky Road*. He also worked with **Peter Erskine** on a session for Bill Cunliffe. And he just returned from a tour of Southeast Asia with Paul Anka, with drummer **Graham Lear**.

**Danny Frankel** has been in the studio with Michael Penn (with John Paul Jones producing). He's also recently recorded with Lou Reed.

**Michael White** has a new solo album out on Noteworthy Records, entitled *No Rules*.

**Mark Schulman** recently came off an extensive clinic tour for Mapex and Sabian and finished the new Foreigner album, with whom he is currently on tour. Mark has also recorded the new Billy Idol single, "Speed" (from the movie of the same name), a few of the tracks for the *Beverly Hills Cop HI* soundtrack, and the new Simple Minds disc (due out soon).



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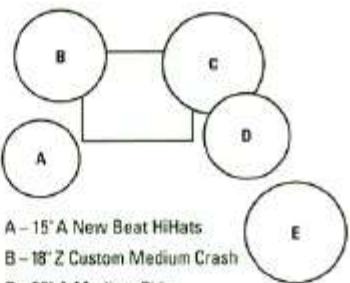
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## Ed Shaughnessy

**A** I recently purchased a cassette titled *Big Band Hit Parade*, on which you were featured. I commend you on another success; I'm amazed at how great your talents are. What struck me most was your outstanding ride cymbal sound. Could you please tell me what cymbal you used on that album?

David Kloeckner  
Omaha, NE

**A** Thank you very much for your kind words regarding the album. It was a great pleasure to make it due to the many fine jazz artists who were on it, like Gerry Mulligan, Dave Brubeck, Doc Severinsen, and Ray Brown. I've had a lot of inquiries about my ride cymbal on that record—partly because Telarc, the record company, gets such a wonderful, natural drum sound on their records. The cymbal I

used is now being marketed by Sabian as the *Ed Shaughnessy Signature* ride. It's a 21" medium-heavy cymbal with a large bell. I hope you have the chance to try one and that you like it. Thanks again for writing, and the best of luck to you.

## Stephen Perkins

**A** I'm very impressed with your work with Porno For Pyros, Jane's Addiction, and Infectious Grooves. The biggest inspiration for me is your gift for coming up with new and creative rhythms that blend well with the music. I have three questions: 1) What music do you listen to for inspiration and to boost your creativity? 2) What kind of exercises do you recommend for me—a beginning drummer—to help with my creativity? 3) How do you go about coming up with rhythms for new songs? Do you follow the bass or the lead guitar?

Erik Kessinger  
Burlingame, KS

**A** Thanks for noticing my work and for taking the time to write to me. To answer your questions in order: 1) What I hear and listen to goes far beyond just music. Common, everyday sounds such as animals, birds, cars, jack-hammers, running water, etc. give me inspiration and trigger some ideas in my head. As far as records are concerned, it is a never-ending selection from Black Flag to Frederick Chopin—anything and everything.

2) For "creativity exercises" I suggest that you: a) Practice rudiments on a pillow daily. b) Play your trap kit without hi-hats



Photo by Aldo Mauro

or cymbals, then play your cymbals without setting up any drums. This unusual procedure will increase your awareness of your instrument. c) Place your drums in different spots on your kit. (Both "b" and "c" may seem confusing at first, but in time they'll give you fresh ideas on new, creative rhythms.)

3) Listen to and be aware of *all* the players you're working with. Never single out just one player when *writing* a new groove. When you know what everybody is playing, you can come up with an original, sensitive, musical drum part. Good luck!

## Adam Nussbaum

**A** I read your interview in the January '94 *MD*, and I was truly inspired by your commitment to musical playing. I'm just beginning to play jazz and was wondering if you could suggest a list of "standards" (which you mentioned the importance of knowing) that you would recommend as a platform for learning this type of music.

Harvey Williamson  
Lakewood, CO

**A** Thanks for your kind response to my article. "Standards" is a term given to songs that are mainstays in the so-called jazz idiom. They're a part of the repertoire that many musicians know so that we all have a common reference point from which to improvise. This way we can just play; we don't have to read. Knowing the melodies, harmonies, and forms eliminates the paper.

Many of these songs are traditional 32-bar forms (AABA); others are blues (12-bar). Many have been written by great

composers other than those from Tin Pan Alley (Cole Porter, Richard Rogers, George Gershwin). A list of standards would be endless, but off the top of my head I can think of "Bye, Bye, Blackbird," "Invitation," "All The Things You Are," "Just Friends," "Alone Together," "All Of Me," "There Is No Greater Love," "C Jam Blues," "Speak Low," and "You Don't Know What Love Is." The best thing to do is to check out renditions of these songs by the masters. Listen, learn, and enjoy.



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## Breaking into The Studio Scene

**Q** I've been playing the drums for six years and have decided to pursue a career as a professional studio drummer—at least part-time. The problem is that I don't know where to start. I was wondering if you could supply me with some information concerning how to pursue this profession.

Michael Combrink  
San Marcos, TX

**A** Over the years *MD* has devoted a good deal of coverage to the studio scene, including both features and a column department totally dedicated to the subject (*In The Studio*). Two features to check out are: "L.A. Studio Drummers Round Table" (November '90) and "Getting Replaced In The Studio" (April '92). Also see Michael Blair's *In The Studio* columns in October and July of 1993 and Craig Krampf's series of columns as follows: October through December '87; January through April,

June, July, September, November, and December '88; and January, February, April, and May '89. These columns will not only give you advice on how to break into the scene, but also what to do once you've gotten started.

There are some quick tips we can offer here to help you in your initial efforts. Some are technical, others involve a combination of ambition, perseverance, and luck.

1. Your playing skills must be strong, and you should be as versatile as possible stylistically. Remember, a "studio drummer" may play anything from an album project to a movie soundtrack to a commercial jingle—all in the same day.
2. Your reading skills must be strong.
3. Your equipment must be state-of-the-art and in top-quality condition. It's a significant advantage to own or have access to more than one drumkit, several snare drums, a variety of weights and models of cymbals, and as many different types of sticks, brushes, and other drum-striking

implements as possible.

4. You should have a working knowledge of electronic percussion (even if you don't own any equipment yourself). You may very well be asked to play with triggers on your drums, or to create a sequenced part on electronic pads. If you can bring in your own electronic gear, including a wide selection of sounds that you can trigger yourself, this will often be a plus.

5. You should be able to work with people easily, without your own ego getting in the way. In almost every case, a studio drummer is hired to play what someone else wants to hear.

6. You must be willing to move to where studio action is happening. Currently, the major American recording cities are Los Angeles and Nashville. There are, however, independent studios in almost every major city.

7. You should have some sort of recorded demo available that you can hand to anyone who expresses an interest in your playing. No one is going to give you any sort

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(Spin Doctors)

**Zildjian**



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of chance at a session unless they have heard how you play.

8. You'll need to go to as many studios as possible and talk to as many people as you can—engineers, producers, other musicians, etc. This is called "networking" and it's the best way to get your name—and desire—known to the people who might be able to help you. Offer to help the engineer out in the studio or to help a drummer out as a tech (for free, at least at first) in exchange for the opportunity to observe what they do. The more you know, the more you have to offer when your opportunity comes. If you befriend enough drummers and engineers (and quietly let them know what your abilities and ambitions are), the day will come when one of them will suggest you for a project.

## Starting Late

I've been playing drums for two years now. I was seventeen when I started, and so far I'm totally self-taught. I

read about many drummers starting at very young ages. My problem is that there are no instructors in the area where I live, and I'm afraid I've started playing too late. I don't want to give it up because I love playing more than anything else. What should I do?

Steve Bowles  
Beckley, WV

**A** Seventeen is certainly not "late" to be starting the drums; many top professionals began playing in their late teens. Your obvious dedication and love for drumming should overcome any handicap you may have in this regard. Your greater problem is the lack of instructors in your area. If it's not possible for you to travel to an area where there *are* instructors, then it would be to your advantage to obtain videos and instruction books to help you in your own studies. Since you may want to start your program at a basic level, we can recommend Jim Payne's *How To Play Drums (From Day One)* and Pat Petrillo's *Snare Drum Rudiments* (both from DCI Video/CPP

Belwin, Inc.) and Harvey Sorgen's *Drumming Made Easy* (from Homespun Video). If you're particularly into rock drumming, Kenny Aronoff's *Basics Of Rock Drumming (Laying It Down)* (also from DCI) is a good primer. Peter Magadini also offers a book/audio cassette package with an accompanying video called *Learn To Play The Drumset, Vol. 1* (from Hal Leonard Publishing).

Once you get comfortable with your playing, there are a wide variety of other videos (as well as book/audio instructional packages) that can help you develop technically and stylistically. For further information, write for catalogs from CPP/Belwin (15800 N.W. 48th Ave., Miami, FL 33014), Homespun Video (Box 694X, Woodstock, NY 12498), and Hal Leonard (7777 W. Bluemound Rd., P.O. Box 13819, Milwaukee, WI 53213). Videos are also available from Hot Licks Productions, P.O. Box 337, Pound Ridge, NY 10576 and Power Rock Enterprises, P.O. Box 5022A-4, El Toro, CA 92630-8522.

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# Gibraltar RACKS

## Gretsch And Leedy Drums

**D**I have a 5 1/2 x 14 Gretsch *Name Band* snare drum. What is the function of, and the correct adjustment for, the dual-tension strainer? Also, did this model originally come with a 40-strand snare unit?

I also have a Leedy (Elkhart, IN) 10x18 drum. The shell is mahogany with a walnut stain finish and maple rims and reinforcement rings. The eight full-length nickel tension rods pass through a center eye-bolt and thread into claws to tension both heads at once. There is no mounting hardware or evidence that there has ever been any. The drum is in very good condition. Anything you can tell me about it—especially its value—would be appreciated.

Mark Zimmer  
Olympia, WA

**A**Our drum historian, Harry Cangany, replies: "The Gretsch *Name Band* snare uses the *Micro Sensitive* strainer. The butt side has a 'fast tension' snare bracket. The large knob on the strainer adjusts the tilt of the bottom of the unit away from the drum, so the knob on the bracket is used to 'pull up' and finalize the tension of the snares. The 'correct' adjustment depends on the sound you like. Record yourself playing the drum after different amounts of tensioning; you'll find the right sound. The *Name Band* regularly was fitted with 42-strand *Power Snare*s."

"I'm guessing that your Leedy is a 12x18 marching tenor drum. It has no mounting hardware because it was designed to be carried on a shoulder sling that would hook onto one of the tension bolts (or key rods). Each of those eight long key rods go through one non-threaded claw on the top hoop and into a threaded claw on the bottom hoop. The rods pass through center supports known as studs. The drum has three plies of mahogany with maple hoops. Unfortunately, marching drums aren't very much sought-after, and single-tension units are long on supply. Unless a collector wants it or someone wants an 'old' wood-finished tom-tom, I'd suggest a value of about \$50."



Jonathan Moffett  
Drums Artist



Russ McKinnon  
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Aaron Comess  
Spin Doctors



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# SPIN DOCTORS' Aaron Comess Living In The Pocket

The fat and ferocious, slammin' bass drum on "Big Fat Funky Booty," the first track off the new Spin Doctors album, *Turn It Upside Down*, blasts out of Aaron Comess' living room speakers. It may be the eloquent phrasing and exquisite attention to detail that defines his drumming, but on this track there's no mistaking that Aaron is nailing this sucker to the floor.

Pigeonholing musicians into categories tends to be standard operating procedure, yet Aaron Comess is enjoying a musical situation that is varied enough to fulfill his artistic impulses yet popular enough to pay the rent. Spin Doctors—the band he helped put together—mix styles from rock to funk to extended jazz jamming, both live and on record. Their debut album, *Pocket Full Of Kryptonite*, sold a hefty six million copies. When Aaron isn't recording or touring with Spin Doctors, you can usually find him in a smoky Manhattan nightspot, playing with one of his side bands.

As he sits cross-legged in his Manhattan apartment in the meat-packing section of Greenwich Village, Aaron surveys his professional journey from Dallas to New York and across the globe with Spin Doctors. Our conversation is launched on the topic of his assorted musical leanings....

by Teri Saccone  
Photos by Paul La Raia

**AC:** I've always been into a lot of different types of music, and I never really envisioned myself as being one particular type of drummer. As I was growing up, people told me, "It would be in your best interest to pick a particular style to concentrate on, because that way you'll become really good at that style." But I could never do it because I was really interested in jazz, rock, blues, and R&B. When I moved to New York, I came up here with the intention of playing

music—any kind of music.

**TS:** No preconceptions?

**AC:** Not really. I could have easily gone in the direction of being a jazz drummer. I spent a year at Berklee, which I really enjoyed. I was practicing six to seven hours a day, and I got into a real routine—plus I was playing a lot there. I was doing all kinds of music: One minute I'd be with a jazz trio and the next I'd be down the hall playing heavy metal. People thought I was a weird guy because of that. I guess people like to put labels on you as being either a "rock drummer" or a "jazz drummer," and there I was hanging out with every kind of musician. It's sad that people like to

cut down musicians who are not into what they're doing.

I spend a lot of time listening to music. Listening is just as good—if not better—practice than playing. Music is really such a mental thing. It's a physical thing in that you need your body to express your emotions, but it comes from your brain. So I think listening is the best way to learn about music. I've learned a lot more doing that than anything.

I grew up in Dallas, which has a great music scene. There's actually an unbelievable number of great musicians there, particularly drummers. But I got to a point down there where I felt I took



it as far as I could. Career-wise, I felt I really couldn't go any further. I came to New York with an open mind, and I began studying with Bernard Purdie and at school, having a good time. I was trying to get some gigs, and I did a lot of the gigs that you find in the back of the *Village Voice*. It's a good experience, but at the same time it's frustrating because out of, say, one hundred gigs, maybe one is worthwhile.

Surprisingly enough, that was the way I met [bassist] Mark White. I played in a funk band here called Spade, which was a great experience and a really good band. Right around the same time, I was going to The New School, and that's where I met [guitarist] Eric Schenkman and [singer] Chris Barron. Eric walked down the hall and heard me practicing. He knocked on the door, we started talking, and he asked me if I would play in the band he was putting together.

So Chris, Eric, and I put the band together, going through three or four different bass players in the beginning. I had known Mark from Spade, and all through that time I had him in the back of my mind because he's such a great bass player, but I honestly didn't think he was gonna fit in with us. The band was R&B and rock with some funk, but it wasn't real heavy funk, and Mark was this amazing funk bass player. I also didn't think it would mesh personality-wise, since he's totally different from the other two guys.

After about five or

six months, I suggested we try mm out, and it worked out great. He added a whole other dimension to the band—that strong heavy funk side. We had leanings in funk, but he really enhanced that. I've learned a lot about funk drumming from Mark. He grew up listening to Parliament and those kinds of real funky bands. He's the guy who taught me about leaning into the 1—crashing down on the cymbal on 1. And that's what funk is: It's playing the groove and slamming down on the 1. Bernard Purdie turned me on to that concept, too.

But I was lucky—really lucky—to find myself in a band situation. Up to that point I never committed myself to just one band. I always played with dif-

ferent bands and did different gigs, and I just never found a band that I was completely psyched with enough to devote my life to until Spin Doctors.

**TS:** What excited you about the band?

**AC:** One of the things that turned me on was that everybody in the band wrote music—it was an opportunity for me to bring songs in. It was also a great venue for developing a style. You're lucky if you can play with the same musicians and really develop a great style, because it's hard when you have to constantly adapt to a different set of musicians every night. I feel lucky and privileged to be in this situation now.

**TS:** You had been making a living in Dallas working in a variety of musical situations, right?

**AC:** I was doing everything from weddings to bar mitzvahs to Top-40 gigs to blues to jazz, and all that was great experience. I felt pretty lucky to be sixteen years old and doing wedding gigs rather than having to work at a fast-food place.



## Diggin' Spins

These are the albums Aaron says he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Miles Davis	A Tribute To Jack Johnson	Billy Cobham
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
Chick Corea	Three Quartets	Steve Gadd
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham
Aretha Franklin	Live At The Fillmore East	Bernard Purdie
Miles Davis	In A Silent Way	Tony Williams
Stevie Wonder	Innervisions	Stevie Wonder
Munch Puppies	Let's Go To Guads Hef Duarte	

"The more I mature as a player, the more I realize that there's a difference between perfect time and human time—I think some songs are meant to speed up or slow down."

I did a grocery store job and I worked at my Dad's office, but those were the only two straight jobs I've ever had.

My brother is also a musician—he plays piano—so we grew up playing together ever since we were kids. We were always in bands together. Since I was young I was always involved in all kinds of things. When I was younger we'd have these all-night jam sessions at my house.

But coming from Texas to New York has been good for my music. People play differently depending on where they're from. I was lucky enough to play a lot of blues down there, which was a great influence for me. With R&B and blues drumming, there's nothing but the groove, which was a really good background for me to have. Plus in Texas everything is so laid back that when you come to New York, there's such an energy. You hear it in people's music. With Eric and Mark, their feel is very aggressive—not rushed, but pushing the beat. I've always tended to play behind the beat, and I think they taught me to push a little bit. And maybe I taught them to hold back a little. We found that happy medium.

**TS:** I noticed a piano and several guitars in your apartment. Which do you use to compose your songs?

**AC:** I write music on both. I actually wrote one of the songs on this album, "More Than Meets The Ear." I wrote it on piano and then figured it out on guitar and showed it to Eric. I write primarily on guitar. It's nice to be in a band where people are open to that, because it's always a hard thing for a drummer to bring in material. In rehearsal, the guitar player has a guitar in this hand and says,

"Hey guys, check this out." For the drummer to get up the nerve to say "Let me see your guitar so I can show you a riff can be difficult. So it's nice that I'm playing with people who encourage songwriting and who are totally into listening to ideas. I definitely think I'm a drummer first, but it's important for me

input on band compositions?

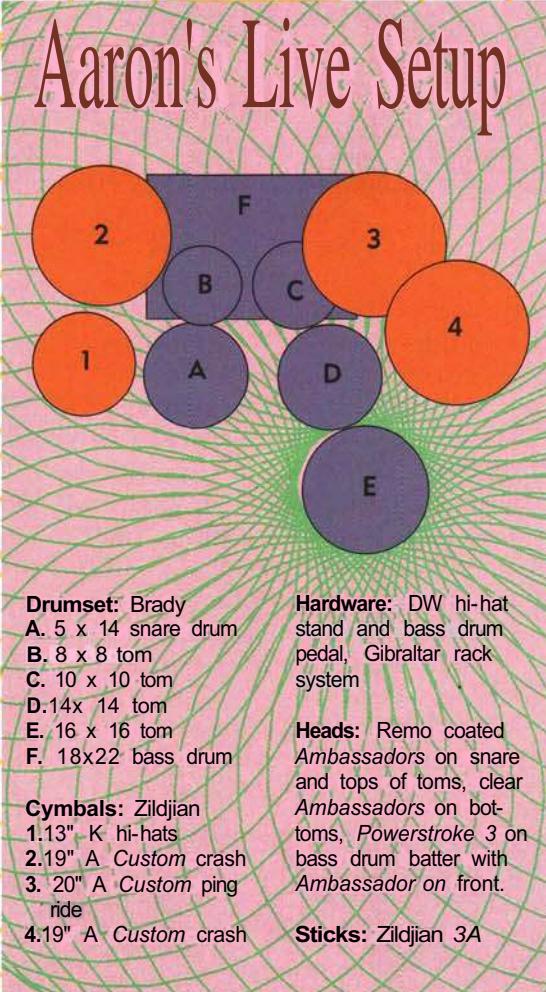
**AC:** We put "Spin Doctors" as writing credits because all the songs are a band effort. There are some songs that we all write together and there are others that two or three of us will write. But in the end, everybody contributes their parts, ideas, and arrangements.

**TS:** There's not really one prominent musical personality in this band. It really comes off as a group effort, with four strong members. Each member really has their moment in the sun.

**AC:** It's nice. I think a lot of people perceive that, too, and within the band that's really the way things are. There's not one person controlling everything—it's a real open policy. That's the thing that helps to keep a band together. Being in a band is so much like a marriage. I mean, I've never been married, but I've had girlfriends, and a band is a lot like a relationship without the sex. You love each other, you hate each other, you live together on the road. We spent our first four years on the road in each other's faces every day. It's nuts.

**TS:** Spin Doctors were a fixture on the club scene in New York long before being signed to Epic Records.

**AC:** I would say we spent two solid years playing around the clubs in Manhattan. We used to play about five nights a week, and that's basically the way the band got its sound. We were never a band that rehearsed a lot—we would rehearse maybe once every two or three weeks, learn some new songs, and then just go out and play them—which is a great way for the material to develop. Our songs were always very raw, and they would develop right on stage in front of people. We were never afraid to go and screw up in front of our audi-



to write too, especially in this band. It's important for me to be creatively satisfied in this group.

**TS:** Some of the songs on *Pocket Full Of Kryptonite* are credited as Spin Doctors compositions. What's your

ence, which is a good way to go about getting your sound together. Everything we did developed in a very natural way from that approach.

**TS:** The response to whether something worked or not was immediate, given the audience's reactions. New York audiences are renowned for their brutal honesty.

**AC:** We were lucky, because we developed a following very quickly, and our fans were so loyal in the beginning. I mean, the same people would be there night after night. And the cool thing was that they wanted us to play weird stuff. They didn't want to come to a gig to hear the same songs played the same way. So it inspired us to constantly mix

things up and play things different ways. So we were lucky to have that kind of start because when we finally hit the studio, we were prepared for it: The material was worked out, it was mature by the time it hit. With the first album, there was no pre-production at all, we just went into the studio and recorded it, mixed it, and went on the road.

We did the new record basically the same way, the only difference being that we wrote some brand-new tunes. We spent about a week writing the new material, rehearsed for a few days here in Manhattan, and went in and cut it.

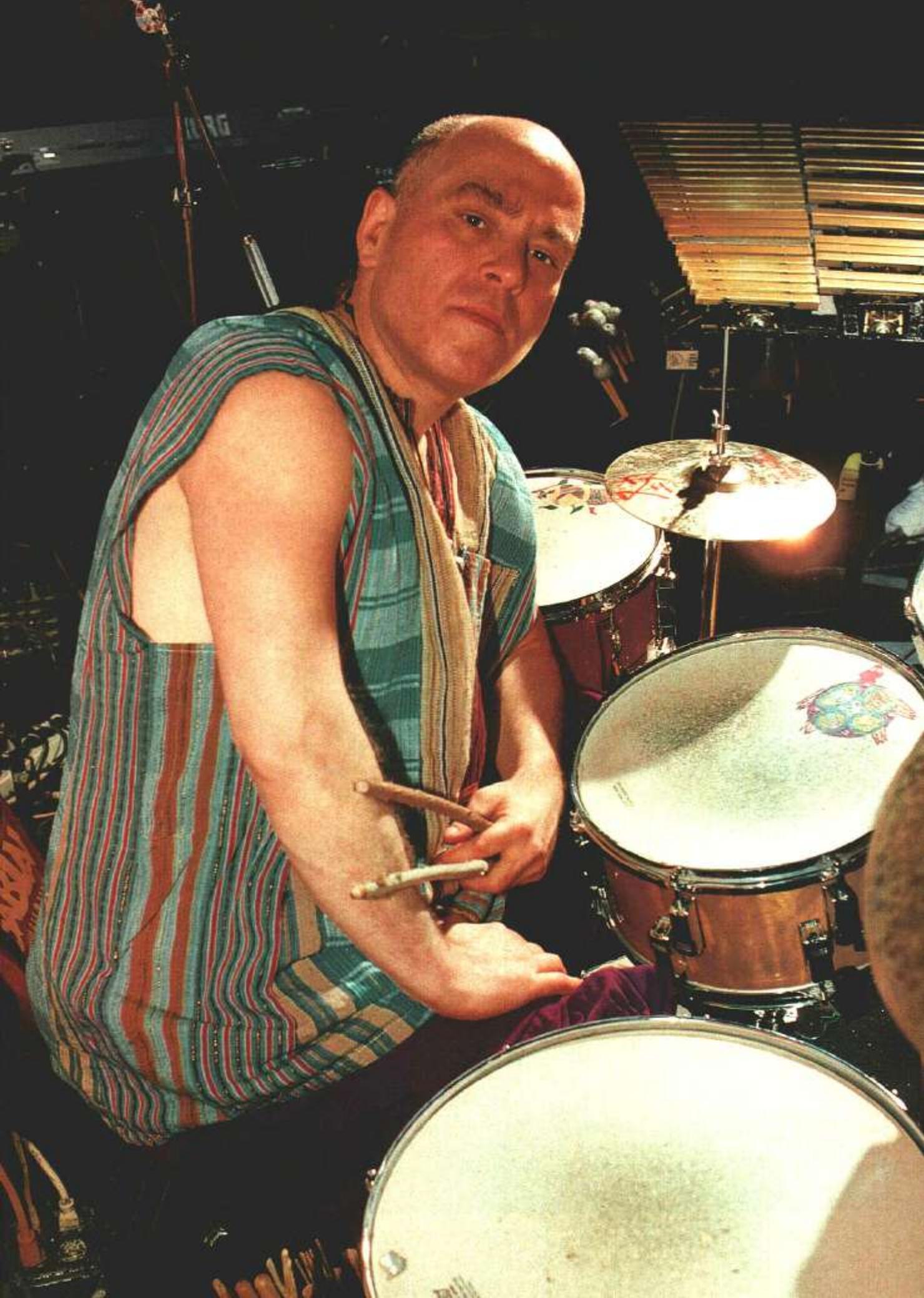
**TS:** You prefer to work quickly in the studio, don't you?

**AC:** The basic tracks were done in three

days. I like to keep basic tracks raw and spontaneous. Whenever we've slaved over a track and done it ten or fifteen times, it seemed to lose the intensity. Over half this record is first takes: You go in, you get through it, no major mistakes, and it's got that feel on it. That's what we wanted on this album. We're not about perfection and we didn't want to make an overly produced, "perfect" record.

*continued on page 66*





# Bob Moses'

## World Beat Wedding

Esteemed music and societal critic Nat Hentoff has written: "Bob Moses has now emerged as the possessor of one of the grander imaginations in America's true classical music. No orchestral composer of this scope, mellow wit, and freshly distinctive range of colors has come along since Gil Evans."

*Time Stood Still*, Moses' latest release, follows the highly acclaimed *When Elephants Dream Of Music*, his opus from the mid-'80s. Its music recalls Thelonious Monk, Gil Evans, Charles Mingus, and a variety of "Pan-African" cultures and styles. Very spiritual in a musical, listenable sense, this is not cosmic babble (or New Age pap), but rather witty, joyous modern music that hints at jazz, rap, African, reggae, and funk from a distinctive point of view.

At a recent gig in New York with his big band, Mozamba, Moses' drumming grooved hard yet upset expected notions about rhythm—he stretched the possibilities of the drumset. Using an extra snare drum and oddly tuned big toms, Moses sounded more like three percussionists than a single trap drummer. The roles of bass drum, snare drum, and toms seemed to shift in context to the story Moses was telling. During a light reggae number (prompted on 12" hi-hats), he began a brief dialogue on the upper tom, only to answer it with a sharp bass drum accent or snare drum cadence. Meanwhile, his band of two bassists, guitar, percus-

sion, keyboards, and horns would be wrapping the rhythm in a South African-sounding melody. Two days later at Carnegie Hall, Moses is playing hard bop with grace and creativity. His drumming breathes and pulses with the music, time standing still as he effortlessly sails with the rhythm.

Taught drums early on by Charles Mingus...a founding member of the first jazz-rock group, the Free Spirits...a member of groups lead by Gary Burton, Pat Metheny, Gil Evans, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk.... Bob Moses is a little-known but highly respected musician, apparent by the company he keeps. *When Elephants Dream Of Music* was produced by Pat Metheny and featured a large cast including Lyle Mays, Bill Frisell, Jim Pepper, Steve Swallow, and Nana Vasconcelos. *Time Stood Still* features up & comers like vibist Brian Carrott, drummer Billy Martin (from Medeski, Martin & Wood), bassist Yossi Fine, trumpeter Miles Evans, and tap dancer Jimmy Slyde.

Dividing his time between work with Mozamba, hired-gun calls, and the New England Conservatory of Music (where, after the success of his first book, *Drum Wisdom*, he occasionally teaches his "Simul-Circular Loopology" or black musical cultures), Moses is busy mixing, stretching, and shaping the musics of the world through his "psychic-spirit jet stream."

By Ken Micallef  
Photos by Ebet Roberts

# Organic Drumming

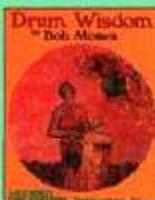
by Bob Moses

I sometimes use a style that I call "organic" drumming. By this I mean playing rhythms that cannot be broken down into quarter notes, 8th notes, triplets, and so on. Two drummers who I consider masters of this style are Elvin Jones and Jack DeJohnette. Often the things they play seem to be random and free-form, and yet they always swing. Many people aspire to play like these two masters. The question is, how can you play organic-type drums without losing the groove or losing your function as timekeeper?

The answer lies in the mastery of internal hearing—learning to hold a very simple framework in your mind and concentrate on that while your body and your hands are moving organically. Perhaps your movements will not even be influenced by the framework, but more by an organic motion of nature. Basically, music is movement. Every piece of music moves from point A to point B, whether it's a totally spontaneous improvisation or a completely written classical piece. You don't have to move from point A to point B in measured steps, such as quarter notes, 8th notes, etc. However, you can hold these measured steps in your mind and use them as a framework, while your playing is organic, like real life.

Very little in real life is metronomically even. A tree has an organic shape, and I can play that shape on the drums. I can play like a bear moving, like a bird flying, or like children rolling in the grass. The trick is to incorporate these graceful motions of life into given forms. When I play organically, I hold the given form in my mind so strongly that nothing I play, no matter how organic, can pull me off that form. I could play like the ocean on "Stella By Starlight"; I might be an avalanche on "All The Things You Are"; I could soar like an eagle on "Blue Bossa." I am still able to hear internally the form of the tune so strongly that, even when I'm playing something of a different dimension than the music, I can still keep my place in the form and fulfill my function as a drummer.

Reprinted from Bob's book, *Drum Wisdom* (published by Modern Drummer Publications), © 1984.



**KM:** On the first tune of Mozamba's live show you didn't play the downbeat on 1 for almost the first half of the song. Does that come out of your collective experience, being willing to break that unwritten rule?

**BM:** It's not really a rule. A lot of times it's the "&" of 4, it's not always the 1. It depends on the groove. I play the 1 often but not all the time. I like to make new grooves that are still funky and still danceable. I do grooves in ten sometimes, but no one can tell 'cause it's still funky. I like to put the snare on the downbeat instead of the backbeat—put the high sound on the 7 sometimes, and that dances. It's a little different than what your ears are used to. There are a million ways to groove; I wouldn't want to commit to any one.

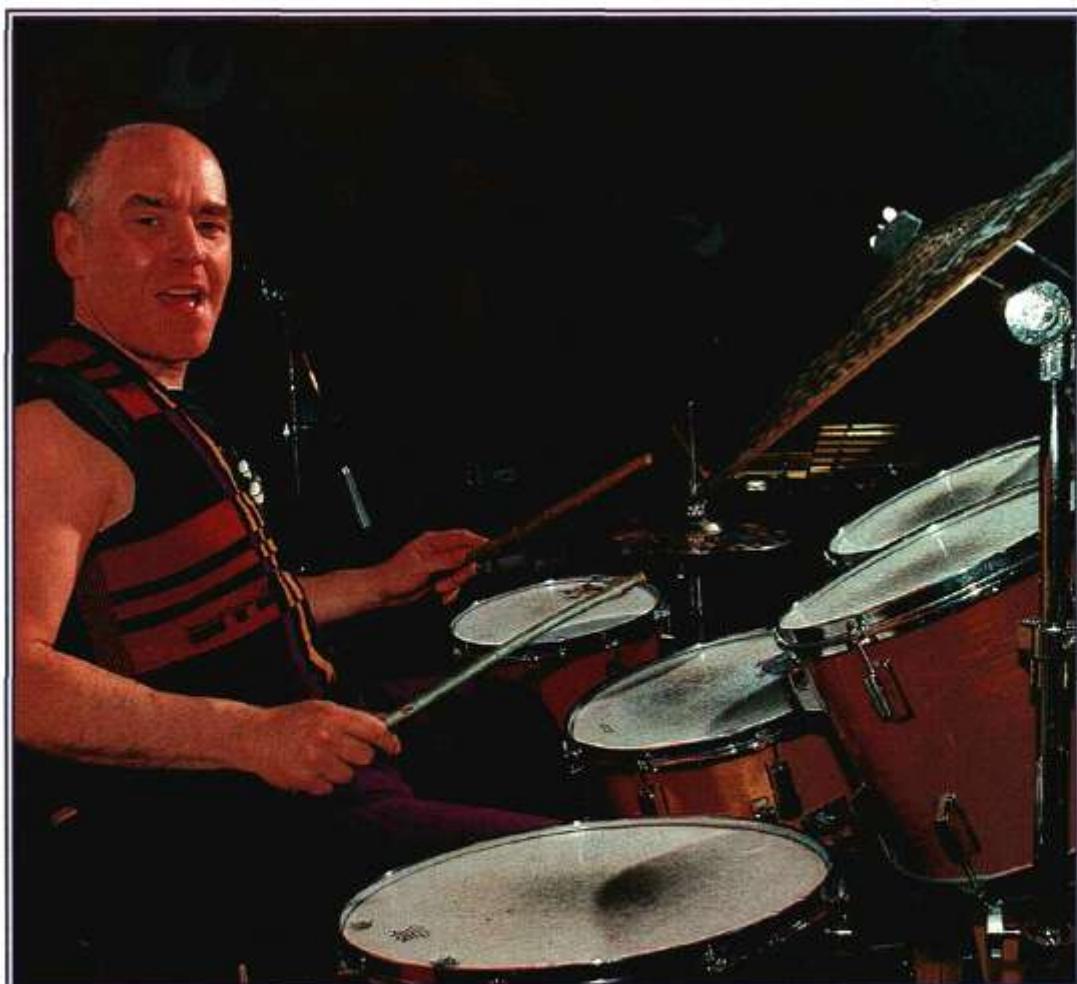
**KM:** You cover so much ground in your drumming and music. You often sound like three drummers instead of one.

**BM:** At this point when I play, what I mostly deal with is orchestration. I've spent a lot of time dealing with structure

and groove—the basic fundamentals of the drummer's function. I have a handle on that. I like to get that work out of the way so I can get to what I call the fun work, which is coloration. I know what content I'm going to play in a given situation—a ballpark idea of my material—so my mental activity is not on what I'm going to play next but how I'm going to make it sound. What color do I need? How long should the note be? What textures should it have? That's sort of the topic of my next book, which I haven't written yet.

**KM:** The first one was *Drum Wisdom*?

**BM:** Yeah. That dealt more with structure and clave, being clear about your source material—taking the clave from songs and applying that approach. That's also very different from most jazz



## BOB'S INFLUENCES

Doudou Ndiaye Rose  
Djabote  
**Dumon Sangare**  
Moussolou, Ko Sira  
**Salif Keita**  
Soro  
**Hermeto Pascoal**  
Festa Dos Deuces  
Kassav  
Vini Pou  
**Mongo Santamaria**  
Yambu  
Alpha Blondy  
Jerusalem  
**Bob Marley**  
Legend  
**Marvin Gaye**  
I Want You, Let's Get It On  
**Aretha Franklin**  
Amazing Grace  
**Peter Gabriel**  
So, Us

Samba Mapangala  
Virunga Volcano  
**Olivier Messiaen**  
Turangalla Symphonie  
**Andrew Hill**  
Point Of Departure, Black Fire  
**Miles Davis**  
Filles De Kilimanjaro  
**Charles Mingus**  
Let My Children Hear Music  
**Thelonious Monk**  
Live At The Five Spot  
**Jaco Pastorius**  
Word Of Mouth  
**Tribe Called Quest**  
Midnight Marauder  
**The Pharcyde**  
Bizarre Ride II  
**Mas**  
Illmatic  
**Me Solaar**  
Prose Combat

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### AS A LEADER

Bittersuite In The Ozone  
(Mozown)  
When Elephants Dream Of Music  
(Gramavision)  
Visit With The Great Spirit .  
(Gramavision)  
The Story Of Moses  
(Gramavision)  
Time Stood Still  
(Gramavision)  
Wheels Of Colored Light  
(Open Minds)  
Devotion  
(Soul Note, due out in 1995)

Bob Moses and Billy Martin:  
Drumming Birds  
(ITM)

### AS A SIDEMAN

**Mike Gibbs Orchestra**  
The Only Chrome Waterfall  
(Ah Um)  
Big Music  
(Virgin)  
**David Lahm & the All-Stars**  
Be Somebody  
(Generation)  
**Hal Galper**  
Speak A Single Voice  
(Enja)  
**Dave Liebman, Bob Moses,**  
**Eddie Gomez**  
Spirit Renewed  
(Owl Time Line)  
**Pave Liebman**  
Homage To Coltrane  
(Owl)  
**Emily Remler**  
Transitions  
(Concord)  
**Keith Jarrett**  
Foundations  
(Atlantic/Rhino)

**Drumset:** Bob has three different kits, including an Eames, Remo, and Noble & Cooley in the following configuration

- A. 7x14 snare drum
- B. 10x10 tom
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 7x14 snare drum
- E. 10x12 tom
- F. 8x10 tom
- G. 12x14 tom
- H. 16x16 floor tom
- I. 14x20 bass drum

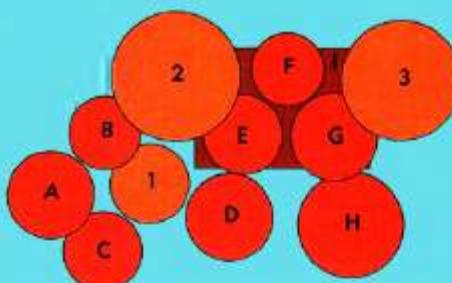
**Cymbals:** various brands

- 1. 12" hi-hats
- 2. 22" crash/ride
- 3. 20" ride

**Hardware:** Pearl

**Sticks:** Vic Firth Bolero and Alex Acuna models

## Bob's Setup



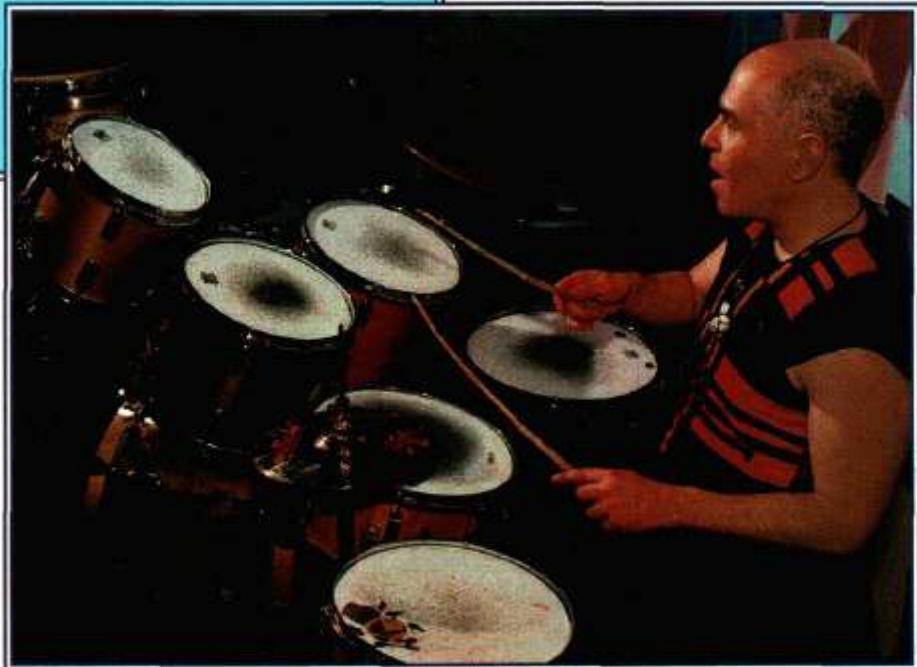
players, even though you could call me a jazz player. I understand the differences and I like to play both ways. Most jazz drummers' approach is like a stream of consciousness...my thing is theme and variation, which is very different. I start with a definite theme, which is not abandoned. It's played with, messed with, cut up and collaged, inverted and stretched, but it comes back. It's never gone until I make the choice to break the theme and begin a new one. It's all question and answer and definite thematic material.

That takes a certain discipline that I

like to play with. It's like Latin players who play off of clave. The best ones are really free because they're so strong with their clave. They have no doubt. They have that internal melody so strong inside themselves that they can play some really out polyrhythms and still groove.

When I first became aware of that concept I decided to apply it to any style I play. That's different from a lot of musicians because they don't tend to play off a theme. Once you become

continued on page 86



# Highlights of MD's Festival Weekend '94

**M**odem Drummer's Festival Weekend '94—held on Saturday, May 21 and Sunday, May 22—surpassed all previous Festivals in its level of enthusiasm and excitement. Both days of the show were sellouts, and the standing-room-only audience was treated to the most varied roster of

artists in Festival history. For the seventh time, Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey saw travelers from across the U.S. and as far away as Norway, England, and Paraguay gather together to enjoy the educational value and the camaraderie of this unique drumming event.

## Pan Around The Neck



The show got off to a rousing start with **Pan Around The Neck**, a marching steel-drum band from Tampa, Florida consisting of Mark Jenkins on lead pan, Jimmy Smith on tenor rhythm pan, Randy Baker on bass

rhythm pan, and Dave Holmstrand on drums. The group incorporated the musical stylings of these unique Caribbean percussion instruments with choreography and good humor to create an infectious performance. The audience—many of whom were seeing steel drums for the

first time—cheered their approval.

Pan Around The Neck appeared through the courtesy of PR Percussion, Tropical Hammer Steel Drums, and The Arts Council Of Hillsborough County.

Photos by Ebet Roberts

# Chad Smith



**C**had Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers was the first drumset artist on the program. Known for his powerful combination of funk, hardcore, and groove stylings—and for his somewhat outrageous, spontaneous personality—Chad kicked the day into high gear by playing along with some Chili Peppers tracks and discussing how he created his drum parts. Then, with characteristic humor, he managed to simultaneously thank and spoof his sponsors during his question-and-answer segment. That segment was "interrupted" by percussionist **Larry Fratangelo**, who came out of the audience—playing a miked-up tamborim—to join Chad on stage and discuss the drummer/percussionist relationship. Larry then performed on congas, timbales, and other percussion as he and Chad first traded licks and then joined together in a percussive onslaught that brought the house down.

Chad's performance was sponsored by **Vater Drumsticks**; Larry was supported by **LP Music Group** and **Paiste Cymbals**.

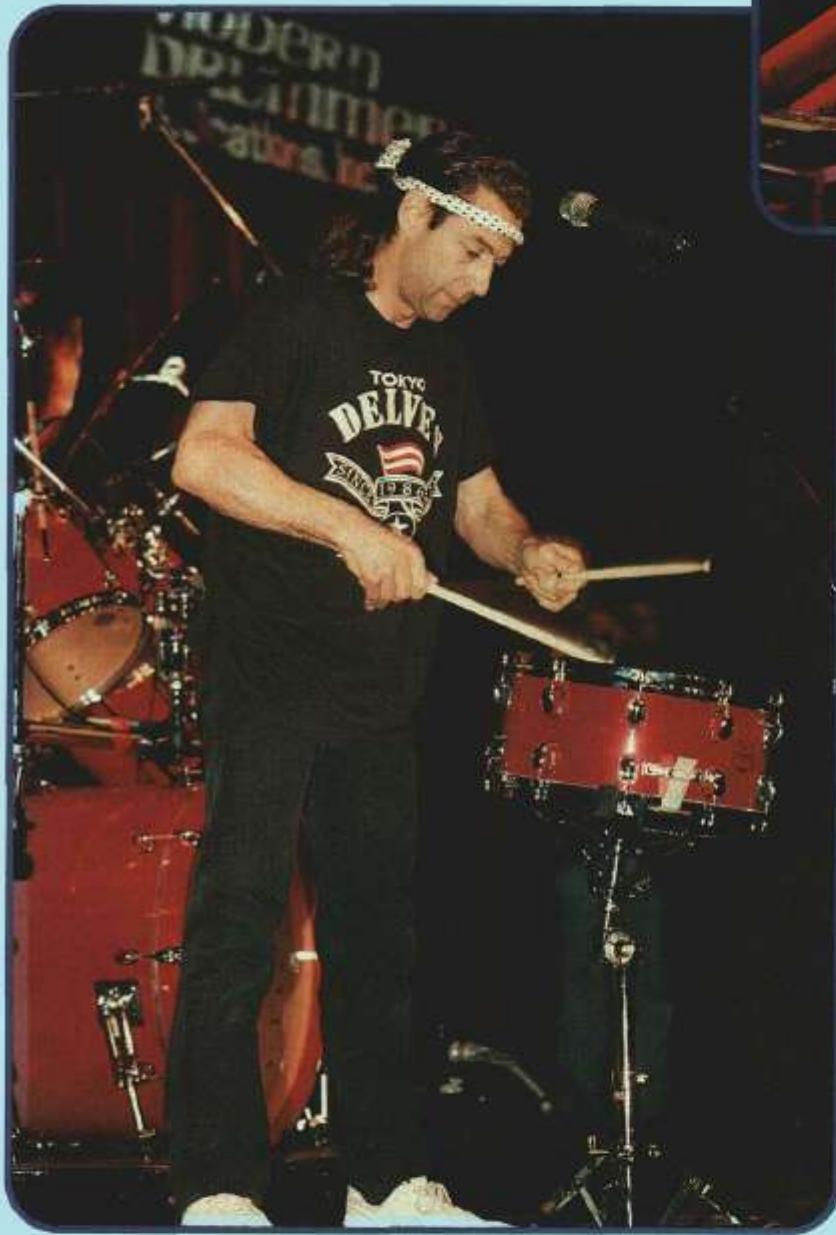
# Talking Drums



**T**alking Drums combined the drumset wizardry of **David Garibaldi** with the Latin percussion artistry of **Michael Spiro** and **Jesus Diaz**. The group's set opened with a brief but impressive drumkit solo by David, after which the three masters combined their talents on several original compositions that seamlessly wove together contemporary funk and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Each player was featured as an individual soloist, yet the performance never lost its "ensemble" quality—a fact that was not lost on the appreciative audience. By blending drumset, hand percussion, and vocals into a totally original percussive creation, Talking Drums firmly established themselves as a complete musical entity.

Talking Drums were presented by **LP Music Group**, **Paiste Cymbals**, and **Yamaha Drums**.

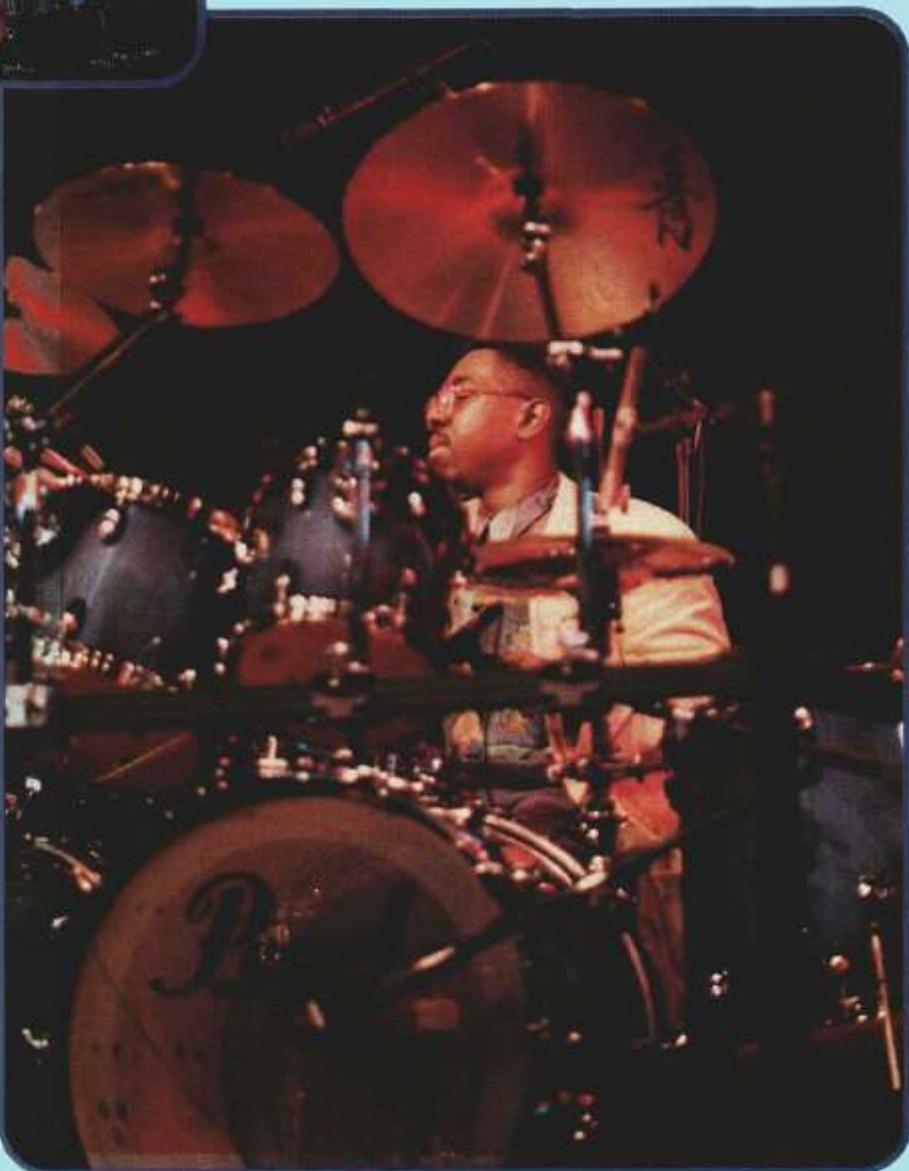
# Simon Phillips



**S**imon Phillips came on stage to a standing ovation, and proceeded to absolutely astound the audience with his combined musical and technical abilities while playing with a number of challenging recorded tracks. Enthusiastic and articulate, Simon then took center stage to explain his philosophy on warm-ups for drumming, in which "the accent is on control." Using a snare drum at the edge of the stage, Simon proceeded to demonstrate single and double paradiddles, moving from slow to incredibly fast tempos, while noting that "one should keep the sticking clean so that you can *see* the changes but not *hear* them." Simon then returned to the kit for his final segment, in which he performed in a variety of odd times and polyrhythms (including, as he put it, "a silly song in 33"). The audience was left in awe of Simon's talent and his incredible energy.

Simon appeared through the courtesy of **Tama Drums**, **Zildjian Cymbals**, and **Pro-Mark Drumsticks**.

# Marvin "Smitty" Smith



Saturday's show came to a rousing conclusion with a dynamic performance by Marvin "Smitty" Smith and his Septet. Seated behind a massive double-bass drumkit, Smitty quickly dispelled any notions that jazz was laid-back or low-key. He and his band came out *smoking*, with a variety of hard-bop numbers that gave each player plenty of room to shine. (The group included Bill Mobley on trumpet, Steve Wilson on alto sax, Craig Handy on tenor sax, Robin Eubanks on trombone, James Weidman on piano, and Ed Howard on bass.) Smitty himself was a blazing ball of musical energy, driving the group to ever-higher levels of intensity. And when it came time to solo, Smitty kicked the heat up yet another notch, displaying a combination of technique and pure heart that left Saturday's audience screaming for more.

Smitty and his band were sponsored by **Pearl Drums**.

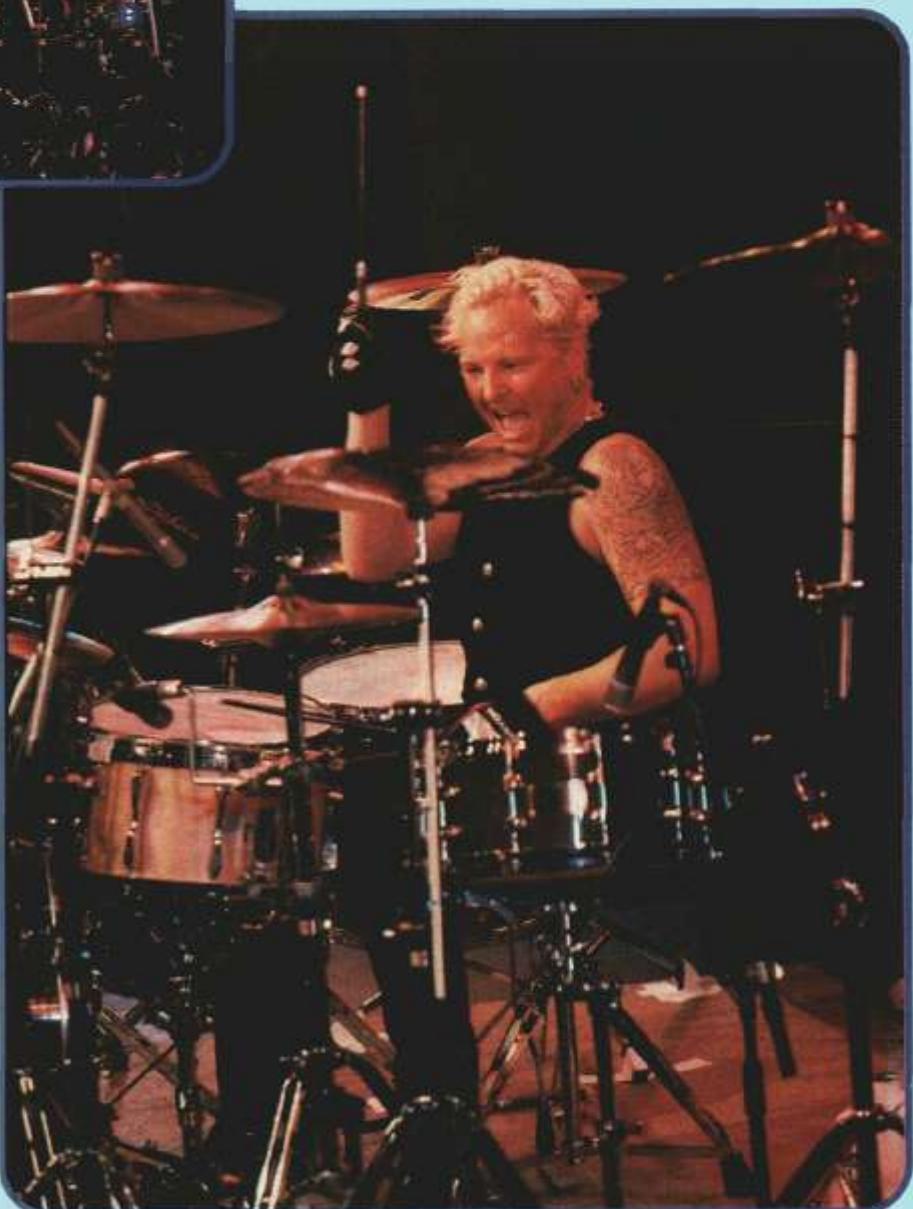
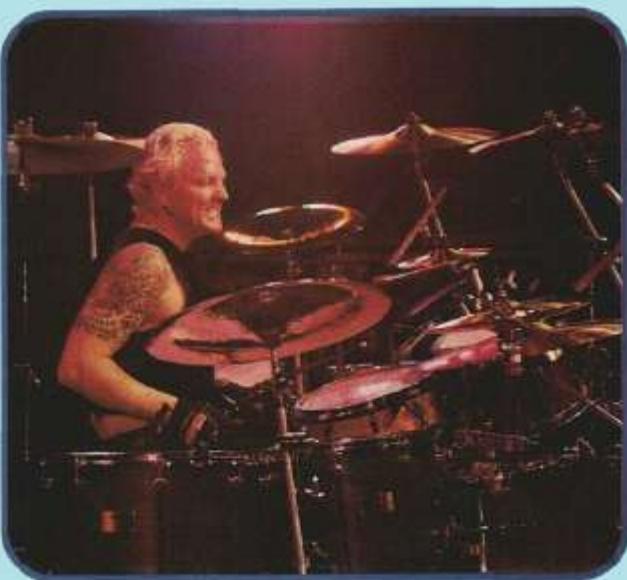
# Ed Uribe

Sunday's show was opened by electronic specialist **Ed Uribe**. In a performance unprecedented in Festival history, Ed accompanied himself on an electronic percussion setup that allowed him to produce drum, cymbal, percussion, bass, and orchestral sounds spontaneously in order to create a dynamic musical composition single-handedly. The audience was both impressed and fascinated at the technology—but even more impressed with Ed's masterful playing ability. Ed's enthusiastic approach to drumming—combined with his blazing technique—earned him a standing ovation from the Festival audience.

Ed's performance was co-sponsored by **KAT, Inc.** and **Vic Firth Drumsticks**.



# Matt Sorum



Power rock drumming was well-represented by **Matt Sorum**. Hot off the clinic trail, the Guns N' Roses drummer proved extremely popular with the Festival audience. Relating to that audience in a casual and humorous manner, Matt described his background and how it led him to his current high-visibility gig. During his drumming segments, he played along to a variety of G N' R, Cult, and other tracks—demonstrating the hard-hitting style that has made him one of rock's leading players.

Matt was sponsored by **Easton Drumsticks** and **Zildjian Cymbals**.

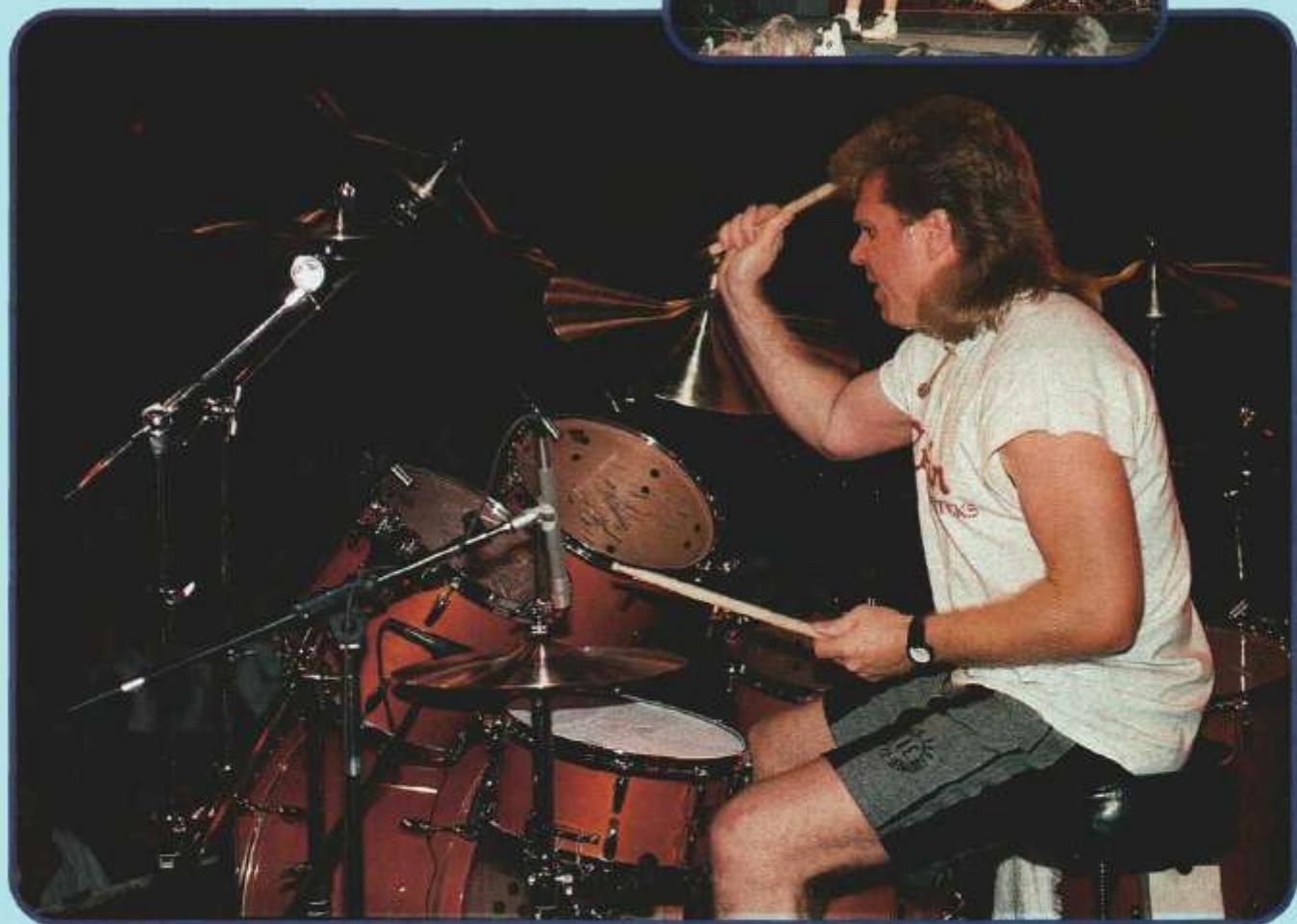
# Clayton Cameron



Contemporary jazz drumming was personified by **Clayton Cameron**, who began his set with a demonstration of his unique brush technique in a spotlight performance at the edge of the stage. Then, joined by guitarist David Gilmore, keyboardist Michael Cain, bassist Santi Debriano, and saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, Clayton demonstrated how brush—and stick—technique can be employed in a musical context to both support the band and feature the drummer. The band moved smoothly through a tasteful and expressive set, which concluded with a solo spot featuring Clayton on drumkit and on two concert snare drums. The members of the audience rewarded this virtuoso performance with a rousing ovation.

Clayton's performance was presented by **Ludwig Drums** and **Calato/Regal Tip Drumsticks**.

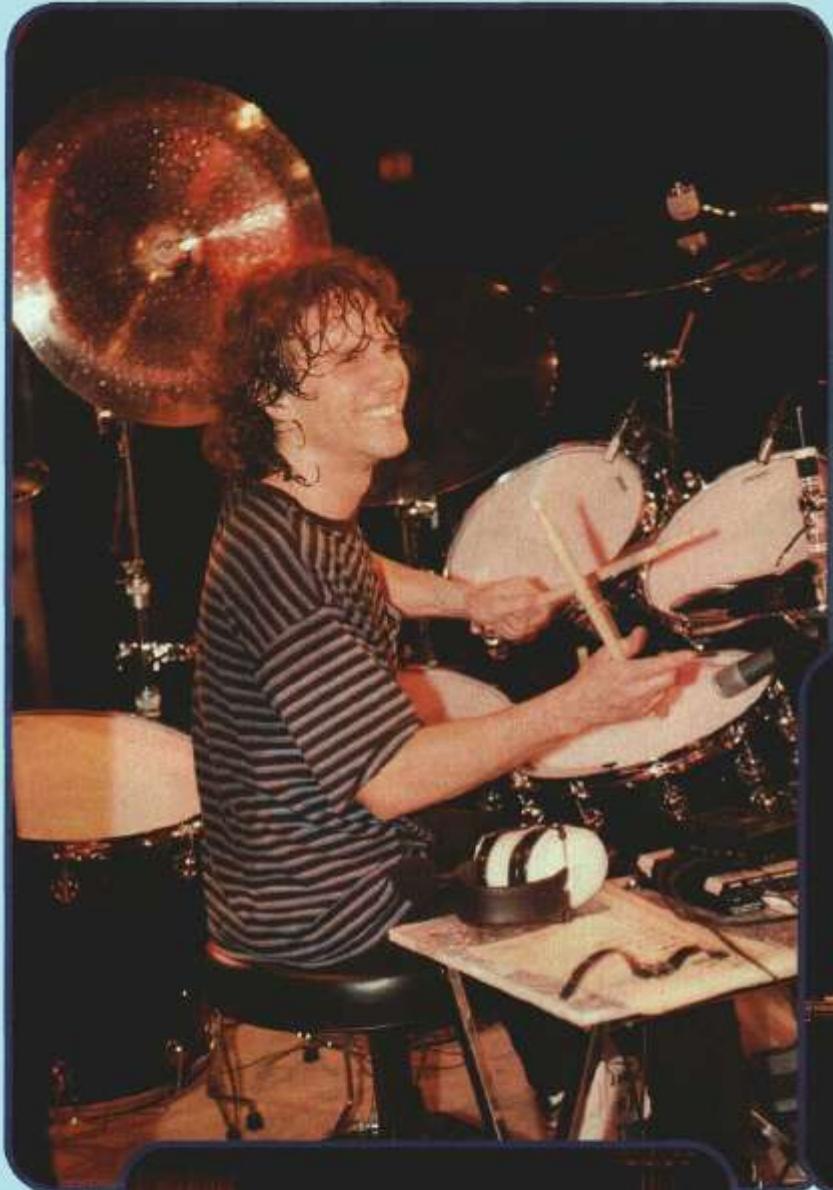
# John Robinson



Studio legend **John Robinson** treated the audience to a forty-minute "concert" set made up of tracks by Rufus and Chaka Khan. J.R. grouped the tracks into segments so that he could explain the construction of the drum parts in each prior to playing them. While playing those tracks, J.R. aptly demonstrated that—while he is no slouch when it comes to chops—the *feel* is what he's really about. Audience members, artists in the wings, and backstage visitors alike were literally dancing to J.R.'s infectious grooves. With a pocket as deep as the Grand Canyon—and an impressive final solo as icing on the cake—J.R. Robinson displayed the qualities that have made him such an asset to the music world's top recording artists for over fifteen years.

J.R. was sponsored by **Zildjian Drumsticks**.

# Rod Morgenstein



Over the course of the Festival, audience members were given the opportunity to win thousands of dollars' worth of door prizes, including one complete drumkit, several snare drums, cymbals, hardware, microphones, videos, and a wide variety of accessory items. MD also continued its tradition of recognizing drummers who traveled the farthest distances to reach the Festival by presenting them with "Duron Johnson Commemorative Long-Distance Traveler Awards (named in honor of the Anchorage, Alaska drummer who has never missed a Festival). Many of the Festival performers—as well as a host of visiting drum stars including festival alumni Joe Morello, Anton Fig, Steve Smith, Danny Gottlieb, and Rob Affuso—spent time with the audience signing autographs, offering tips, and sharing the good feelings that are always a part of this annual get-together of the drumming community.

The Festival concluded with a dazzling performance by **Rod Morgenstein** and the **Dixie Dregs**. The group's stellar lineup included Steve Morse on guitar, T Lavitz on keyboards, Dave LaRue on bass, and Jerry Goodman on violin. From the moment the band kicked off, the collective and individual virtuosity of these five gentlemen literally radiated from the stage. The group played a combination of crowd favorites from previous recordings and songs from their new *Full Circle* album. Rod Morgenstein—who, by his indelible smile, must be one of the *happiest* drummers around—propelled the band with his trademark musicality, power, and drive. And when it came time for his solo on the Dregs' famous "Cruise Control," his drumming left jaws agape and heads shaking, and provided a high-energy close to the weekend's performances.

Rod and the Dixie Dregs were co-sponsored by **Premier Drums**, **Sabian Cymbals**, and **Vic Firth Drumsticks**.



**John Robinson**  
currently on tour with Barbra Streisand

Arrival. To different people the word means different things. If you were to check the dictionary you'd find it defined as reaching a goal or objective through effort. For a drummer it simply means the next level, in both ability and equipment. The ability part of this equation is all up to you, the last half is where we can help.

Since its introduction, the Masters Series has been acclaimed by many to be one of the finest drumsets ever manufactured. These beautifully lacquered thin shell drums produce a warm, full bodied tone that seems to resonate forever. But sound quality is only one of the reasons why the

Masters Series is the choice of players like John Robinson, whose list of live and recording credits seem beyond belief.

Visit your local Pearl dealer and let your ears be the judge. Tune them to suit your style and personal preference, play them, and above all just listen. Arrival is one thing, to arrive in style is quite another. Either way, when you do, the Masters Series will be there waiting.

**Pearl®**

The best reason to play drums.



# Tama Iron Cobra Bass Drum Pedals

by Adam Budofsky

Nice! Tama has taken many of the most requested and useful features in bass drum pedal technology and put them all in one package. Actually, we're really talking about several different packages, if you count the *Iron Cobra's* twin-pedal versions as well the availability of stripped-down "Standard" models, to which you can add whichever features you choose.

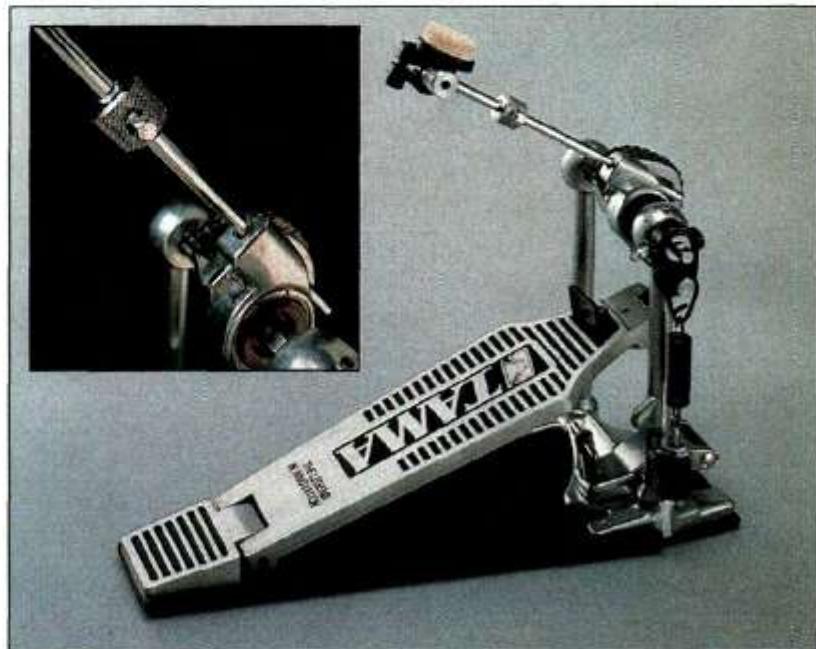
Of course there have been pedals introduced in recent years that have offered various helpful and functional features. But many of these pedals have been too complicated, fussy, delicate, or massive for your average Joe. The *Iron Cobra's* options fit cleanly within a design that resembles most standard pedals', yet this pedal truly delivers that tough road-worthiness Tama has promoted in their products for many years now. Let's look at some specifics.

### Power Glide And Rolling Glide Cams

Tama's *Power Glide* and *Rolling Glide* cams provide two distinct actions. The *Rolling Glide* model includes a single-chain-drive on a round cam, which provides even torque throughout the beater's path. According to Tama, the cam's open channel and small number of teeth result in less metal-to-metal contact for "studio-quiet" operation. Track guides are also placed on both sides of the cam to ensure that the chain remains centered.

The *Power Glide* cam is meant to provide just that: a more powerful, accelerated stroke as the beater approaches the batter head. This is not a new concept, but it is one that power players have enjoyed lately. *Power Glide* pedals also feature a two-chain drive, again for added strength and power. In addition, the two types of cams are completely interchangeable, providing players with the advantage of changing their pedal's action as their needs change.

It should be noted that both models benefit from a ball bearing design that eliminates locking nuts on either end of the axle, which Tama claims act like "brakes" in pedals that use them. Instead, *Iron Cobras* employ concentric collar locks that support the inner and outer races of the ball bearings, which allegedly apply no pressure to the side-wall or roller portions of the bearings. This design certainly seems to do the trick, because these are some of the smoothest and most secure-feeling pedals to come down the pike in a while.



Power Glide "Professional" pedal with Beater Balancer (inset)

### Professional Features

Tama offers a number of optional features that delineate "Standard" *Iron Cobra* pedals from "Professional" models. Two of these, the *Vari-Pitch* beater holder and the footboard adjustment, add great flexibility to the *Iron Cobra*. The *Vari-Pitch* beater holder allows you to adjust beater arm angle independent of footboard angle, which can also be independently adjusted via Tama's *Speedo Ring*.

Other "Professional" features include *Spring Tight*, a triangular locking nut designed to stop spring slippage during playing; the *Beater Balancer*, a small weight that can be moved up and down the beater shaft for significant changes in feel; a *Toe Stopper*; the *Para Clamp*, a movable, hard-plastic bass drum hoop grip that allows the pedal to stay secure regardless of the drum's angle; and a *Stabilizing Plate*, which helps reduce noise and creep as well as add to the pedal's strong and secure feel. (All adjustments are made easily with Tama's *Drum Hammer*, which combines a drum key and hexagonal wrench in one handy item.)

One of the *Iron Cobra's* most unusual and clever options is the availability of interchangeable, angle-adjustable wood, rubber, and felt beater heads. These can easily be removed for quick change (enabling the beater shaft to remain in position) and can be adjusted to make flat contact regardless of how far away your batter head is. The wood and rubber heads add a more pointed



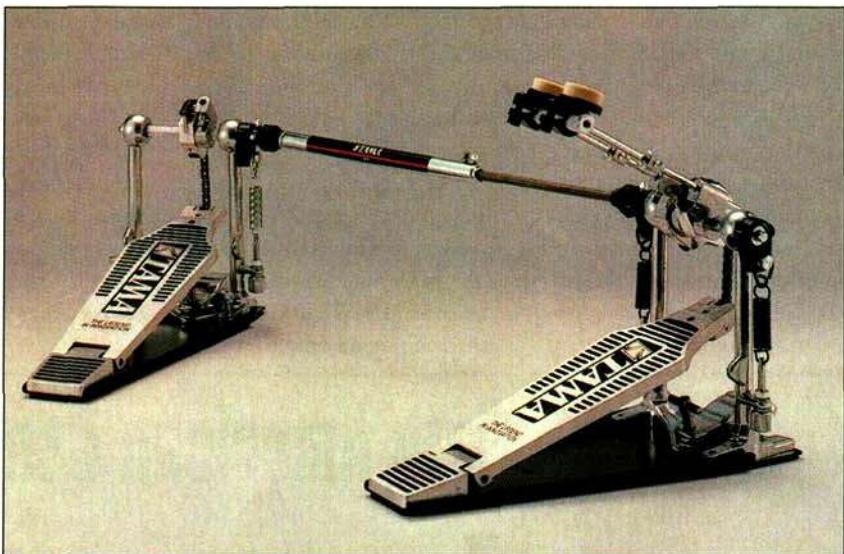
**Close-up of Iron Cobra's Para Clamp**

tone than the felt head, though this head gave me more of a pointed sound than my standard felt beater.

Each of these features are clever, useful options that make the fully loaded version of the *Iron Cobra* a pedal you can truly make your own. They also add a bit of weight to the pedal, especially the *Stabilizing Plate*, which also prevents the pedal from being able to be folded up for snug pack-up. Given the advantages in flexibility and strength these options bring, though, a little added weight and space hardly seem worth complaining about.

#### **Iron Cobra Twin Pedals**

Tama also offers *Iron Cobras* in double-pedal models. These offer all the advantages of their single-pedal brothers, and may in fact benefit even more from the high degree of flexibility, since drummers rarely have the same abilities and feel between their feet. The ability to change beater and pedal angle, spring tension, and weight may make adjusting to a double-pedal setup that much easier. In addition, a "left-footed" version of the *Iron Cobra* is available, as well as a twin pedal attachment that anchors the auxiliary pedal to the hi-hat stand. *Iron Cobra* twin pedals are available in Professional models only.



**Roller Glide "Professional" double pedal**  
**Conclusions**

There are basically three things you want from a pedal—good feel, flexibility, and strength—and the *Iron Cobra* has plenty of each. For once it's nice to believe the hype. The *Iron Cobra* is not a light-duty pedal, but I wouldn't call it "massive" either, and part of its strength and power certainly comes from its weight and size—though it would seem that its smart design elements have as much to do with these qualities, if not more.

Pricing for the *Iron Cobra* is as follows: *Power Glide HP90S* single pedal Standard model: \$169.99; *Power Glide HP90P* single pedal Professional model: \$239.99; *Power Glide HP90TW* double pedal: \$559.99; *Roller Glide HP80S* single pedal Standard model: \$149.99; *Roller Glide HP80P* single pedal Professional model: \$219.99; *Roller Glide HP80TW* double pedal: \$529.99. Pedals with individual options are priced accordingly. *Iron Cobras* come standard with a hard felt beater head; rubber and wood heads are \$13 each, a package of all three is \$54.

## **Tama Tension Watch Drum Tuner**

**by Adam Budofsky**

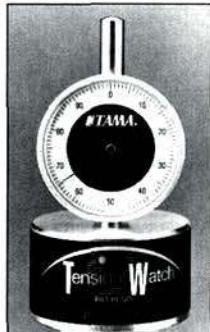
Perhaps tapping into our fascination with anything gadget-like, Tama has given drummers a way to *scientifically* ensure our drumheads are in tune with themselves: the *Tension Watch*.

The concept is pretty simple: Since the tension of a drumhead is what determines its pitch, if we can precisely tighten each lug using a *visual* tool, rather than our sometimes inaccurate (or obstructed) sense of hearing, we can guarantee perfectly pitched drums. It looks like Tama has taken the idea of "hearing with

your eyes" to a new level.

Here's how it works: Simply "zero out" the *Tension Watch*, carefully place it on the drumhead an inch in front of a lug, crank the lug nut until the dial reaches your predetermined optimal pressure, repeat for each lug, and—*da da*—perfect pitch!

Well, kind of. You still have to do the hard work yourself, like determining what your particular drum's "perfect pitch" is,



and what the relative tension between the two heads should be to get that great sound. Also realize that, just like tuning by ear, when you crank one lug, the tension on the opposite lug changes as well. And don't forget that, since drumhead and bearing edge manufacturing are not exact sciences, you'll probably need to start from scratch when either changing or rotating heads.

Tama includes a small chart on which you can record your optimum tuning ranges, and even suggests tension values to shoot for. Using the chart will save you time in future tunings and tweaks, which is good, since using the *Tension Watch* adds one more step to the tuning procedure. (I'd still recommend employing the

old-fashioned tap-and-listen method when using the *Tension Watch*, if only for a quick check. After all, you're always going to have to trust your ears to a *certain extent*.)

Those who will find the greatest advantages of the *Tension Watch* are drummers who often have to tune drums in a noisy environment (last-minute sound checks come to mind) or players with less than a high degree of confidence in their own abilities to finely distinguish pitch differentials. If these sound like good enough reasons to invest \$129.95 in the *Tension Watch*, by all means check out this unique accessory.

## Vic Firth American Concept Sticks

by William F. Miller

What a terrific time it is to be a drummer. We have so many excellent products to choose from to help us get our music across. And this is certainly true in terms of drumsticks: The number of models with varying features is astounding.

Vic Firth continues to offer new models, and earlier this year introduced a new line of sticks featuring five new models. The line is called *American Concept*, and the first thing you notice about these sticks is that they have a slightly darker color than the usual hickory stick. Firth explains that this is a different type of hickory, called "honey-hickory," which comes from a different part of the tree. The wood is said to be more durable.

Initially I was wondering if this wood type might make a stick feel different than the usual hickory stick, maybe being more dense, heavier, and harder on the hands—more like an oak stick. However, the honey-hickory models feel very similar to other hickory sticks. They might be slightly harder than the usual hickory stick, but not so much as to really be noticeable. They were very comfortable in weight and stick density, so the only major difference in terms of stick makeup is the color—which, again, is only slightly darker than usual. What makes this new line of sticks particularly interesting are the dimensions and features of the five new models.



American Concept sticks (from left to right): Funk 3B, Jam Master, Hammerhead, Powerplay, and Viper models

### Jam Master

David Garibaldi assisted in designing the *Jam Master*. The stick measures 16 7/16" in length and is .560" thick. It features an extra-long taper and a small barrel tip. The *Jam Master* sounds great on a ride cymbal, giving a nice "point" to the sound. I played a particularly "washy" K Zildjian with it, and the sound was controlled and very nice. It's also a very quick stick, with a design that allowed me to play fast without much effort. This stick would work very well in both jazz and funk settings. (The *Jam Master* lists for \$9.85.)

### Funk 3B

Current Tower Of Power drummer Russ McKinnon helped design the *Funk 3B*. This model measures 16 1/8" in length and is .600" thick. It has a very short taper, a thick neck, and a large barrel-shaped tip, giving it a lot of front-end weight. The *Funk 3B* is a powerful stick without being too heavy, and the front-end weight allows you to dig into the drums and hi-hat. I'd recommend this model for funk and rock players. (The *Funk 3B* lists for \$9.85.)

### Viper

Here's a unique stick with a design suggested by Vinny Appice. What immediately jumps out at you on this model is the knurled surface that is located near the butt end of the stick and runs about half-way up the shaft. This roughed-up surface is designed to help you hold onto these sticks, and I have to say it works well. I really felt an extra bit of control with the *Viper* due to this feature, and I think this type of design would be a nice added feature to *any* model stick. The only drawback might be for drummers who twirl their sticks, since the knurled surface is a little painful on those more sensitive, in-between-the-finger spots.

The *Viper* has a few other interesting design elements, including a thick neck and a very long tip. You get a lot of wood on drums and cymbals with this model, so it gives you a big sound without being an overly huge stick. (It measures 16 1/2" in length, .600" thick.) This is a very interesting stick that would work well for rock drummers who like to play with power but who also want to be able to play fast. (The *Viper* lists for \$11.25.)

### Powerplay

This is a large stick meant for rock. (Kenny Aronoff helped in the design.) It measures 16 13/16" in length and is .635" thick. At first glance it appears to be a normal stick, until you look near the butt end. About two inches up from the end are grooves, which are cut into the shaft. These grooves are designed to help grip the stick better.

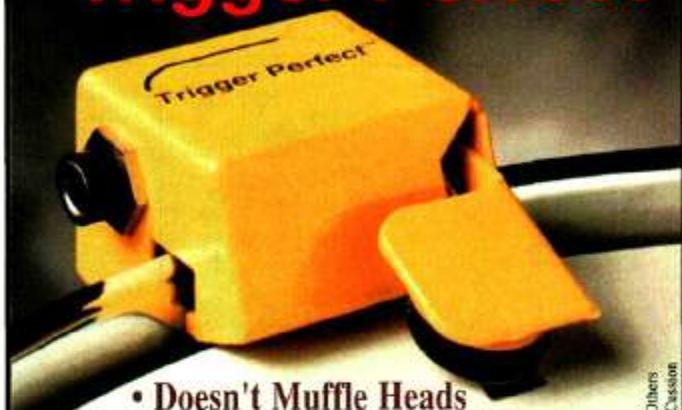
When most drummers play hard, they move their hands further down the stick for more power, so the grooves are located in just the right place. And while I did find the grooves to be helpful in holding the sticks, it was a much more subtle effect than the *Viper*'s knurled surface. However, the *Powerplay* might be just the right combination of large stick and grip surface for loud players. (The *Powerplay* lists for \$9.85.)

### Hammerhead

Yikes! At 17" in length and .615" thick, this is a *big* drumstick! The surprising thing about the *Hammerhead*, though, is how good it feels to play. For a large stick it is surprisingly well-balanced. This might be due to the unique tip design: It's as thick as the diameter of the stick, but extremely short—almost squat. The tip design also produces a slightly darker sound on ride cymbals. If you're looking for a large stick, I'd recommend checking this big boy out just for the feel. (The *Hammerhead* lists for \$9.85.)

One final comment: As with all Vic Firth sticks, these models were pitch-paired, meaning the sticks were matched at the factory and sent in pairs. I have to say that these sticks were amazingly close in pitch, weight, and feel. I had a few other editors check them as well, with the same results. (Let me point out that the sticks examined for this *Product Close-Up* were not sent for review by the company.) Obviously a sign of quality.

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### DW Pedal And Drum Finish Developments



Drum Workshop's DW 5000 series double bass drum pedals now feature a left (slave) pedal that incorporates an open, single-post design utilizing

ing a low-mass casting. This new design allows drummers to position their auxiliary bass drum pedal closer to their hi-hat pedal for greater comfort, and is said to provide easier foot movement and more speed. The new double pedal—along with all DW 5000

series pedals—is now available with DW's optional 50-H ball-bearing hinge assembly. The 50-H employs a heavy-duty machined one-piece steel hinge/axle element that utilizes ball bearings to achieve (according to the manufacturer): increased strength, reduced friction and stress, and a fast, smooth, precise feel. The new hinge is available as an option on any DW 5000 series pedal at an additional cost of \$45 each, or as a retro-fit item for existing DW pedals at a suggested retail price of \$65 each.

DW has also recently developed two new drum finishing technologies: Satin Oil and Diamond Lacquer. The natural Satin Oil finish offers durability and a unique appearance while providing a set of drums said to be "visually and acoustically as close to their raw state as possible." Diamond Lacquer finishes are available in any of DW lacquer colors or sunburst combinations and feature a durable, transparent colored lacquer sprayed on top of DW's exclusive *Diamond FinishPly* to create a colorful textured effect that is "both classic and contemporary." **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334.**

### LightSPEED TK-150 Headset Microphone

LightSPEED Technologies offers a professional headset microphone with a noise-canceling condenser element. The TK-150 is compatible with most wireless microphone systems. The headset features a very low profile, comfortable fit, and a flexible boom that adjusts the mic's position easily. The headband fits behind the head and is barely visible from the side and back. Suggested list price is \$99 with a 3.5mm mini-plug or pigtail. A phantom power module is also available. Wireless configurations are available at prices starting from \$300 for a complete system. **LightSPEED Technologies, Inc., 15812 SW Upper Boones Ferry Rd., Lake Oswego, OR 97035, tel: (800) 732-8999, fax: (503) 684-5538.**

### Vic Firth Products

Vic Firth now offers their *Ralph Hardimon Signature* marching stick model in a nylon-tip version. The stick measures 17" long and features a barrel-shaped tip and lengthened taper for quick rebound and maximum control. List price is \$11.40 per pair.

A collaboration with clinician/educator Dom Famularo has resulted in the *Dom Famularo Pad Stick*. A unique training tool to help stretch and strengthen a drummer's muscles during practice pad exercise, the stick is not intended for performance. It measures 16 1/2" long and .675" thick, is made from maple, features a long taper and a large round tip (for maximum rebound), and has a super-high-gloss finish. Suggested retail price is \$9.85 per pair.

Also new in Firth's *Emil Richards* series of specialty sticks and mallets are the *ER6 Odaiko Stick* (a new twist on a Japanese tradition) at \$24.90 per pair, the *ER7 Pop Gun* (at \$29.90), and the *ER8 Jangle Stick* (at \$22.90).



DW drums in Satin Oil (top) and Diamond Lacquer finishes

Finally, Firth has introduced the *Highlander* series of pipe band sticks and mallets. The *PBS1* snare stick is fashioned from light maple with an elongated, conical shoulder and a unique tip shape to facilitate the "closed roll" work so prevalent in this music. The butt is .790" thick, the neck is .410" thick, the tip is .600" thick and .740" long. The stick is 16 3/8" long overall. Suggested list price is \$10.90 per pair. The *PBT1* tenor mallet has a short, fleece-covered cork head designed to bring out the darker sounds of the tenor drums. Length: 7 3/4", shaft thickness: .370", head diameter: 2 1/2". The mallets are priced at \$24.90 per pair. The *PBB1* bass drum mallet is light and soft, capable of producing the dark, warm, resonant sounds characteristic of Scottish bass drums. Length: 11 1/2", head width: 4 1/2", head length: 5 1/4", tapered handle grip: .840" to .635". Suggested list price is \$52.00 per pair. **Vic Firth, Inc., 65 Commerce Way, Dedham, MA 02026, tel: (617) 326-3455, fax: (617) 326-1273.**

## Aquarian Tommy Lee Signature Heads

A series of drumheads developed in conjunction with Tommy Lee is now being offered by Aquarian. Included are a snare batter (featuring extremely thin 9" dots on both the top and underside of the head), tom batters (featuring a larger-than-usual but extremely thin dot on the playing side only), and bass drum heads (featuring thin dots that are smaller than usual). The heads were designed to meet Tommy's requirements for "response, big sound, full tone, and durability." For price ranges and other information, contact **Aquarian, 1140 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807, (714) 632-0230.**

## Pegal Tip Regal Grips



Regal Tip is now offering *Regal Grips*: high-quality, reusable gum-rubber sleeves developed to provide drummers with improved drumstick grip and shock absorbency. Available in two sizes, *Regal Grips* fit virtually any type and size of drumstick and can be positioned to suit the individual drummer's needs. The grips can be removed and re-used as the sticks break or wear out. Suggested list price is \$5.35 per pair. **Calato Manufacturing, 4501 Hyde Park Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY 14305, tel: (716) 285-3546, fax: (716) 285-2710.**

## Brady Drums Re-Introduced In U.S.

After a short absence, Brady drums are now available again in the U.S. market. The company offers 10", 12", and 14" snare drums along with complete drumkits featuring jarrah ply shells in a variety of natural and exotic finishes. According to the company, the past two years have been spent re-designing the way the drums are manufactured in order to provide a better product. Current U.S. distribution is being handled by **Woody Compton, 1325 Sharon Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303, tel/fax: (904) 386-2388.**

## Zildjian K Custom Medium Rides



Zildjian's new *K Custom Medium Ride* features a number of new design concepts, including tonal grooves on the top side of the cymbal only, and a new hammering technique known as "over-hammering." Like other *K Customs*, the Medium Ride is designed to offer the subtleties of the *K* series in a more amplified environment. However, it has more spread and color than its peers, and is therefore said to be the most versatile of all the *K Customs* with the broadest range of applications. The cymbal is available in 20" (\$352 list) and 22" (\$414 list) sizes. **Avedis Zildjian Co., 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061, tel: (617) 871-2200, fax: (617) 871-3984.**

## Big foot Floor Tom Feet

XL Specialty Percussion offers *Big Foot*, a sound-isolating retrofit rubber foot for use on floor tom legs. An internal suspension spring prevents the drum's resonant vibrations from being "tapped off into the ground via the legs. The special feet are designed to fit most sizes of floor tom legs. List price for a set of three is \$29.95. **XL Specialty Percussion, 16335-5 Lima Rd., Huntertown, IN 46748, (800) 348-1012.**

## Gibraltar Rack, Stands, And Pedals



to 36". Each rack comes equipped with six T-clamps, four multi-clamps, and memory locks to fix clamp positions. U.S. retail price is \$425.50.

Also new from Gibraltar is the 9400 series of cymbal stands. Each is fitted with a heavy-duty, conventional-style tilt, super-lock adjustment mechanisms, ABS inner tube guide bushings, and a low-center-of-gravity double-braced tripod. The series includes the 9410 (straight), 9409S (short boom), 9409M (medium boom), and 9409L (long, telescopic boom) models, and list prices range from \$118.50 to \$149.50.

Finally, Gibraltar has introduced the *Rock* line of bass drum pedals designed to offer budget-conscious drummers a heavy-duty option. The pedals feature oversized chain or strap drives, heavy-duty pedal boards, and cast frame assemblies. They will be available in three different configurations: single pedal/strap drive (\$79.50), single pedal/chain drive (\$94.50), and double pedal/chain drive (\$250). **Kaman Music Corp., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002, tel: (203) 243-7941, fax: (203) 243-7102.**

## Pro-Mark Don Henley Commemorative Stick

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Pro-Mark has arranged with Eagles drummer Don Henley to offer a limited edition of five hundred pairs of *Don Henley* drumsticks for sale. In addition to the sticks themselves, those who order will also receive a numbered certificate of authenticity with an original signature done personally by Don. All proceeds will go to benefit the Walden Woods Project, a non-profit organization established

to buy and preserve endangered land in Henry David Thoreau's woods (the setting for Thoreau's famous *Walden*). Henley has been active in the project for several years.

Those wishing to order the commemorative sticks may send \$50 to Pro-Mark Corp., 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025. Checks or money orders must be made payable to: The Isis Fund/Walden Woods Project. **For more information, call Pro-Mark's Drummer's Hotline at (800) 233-5250.**

## New Catalog Releases

**Sabian** has released *NewsBeat '94*, its latest annual catalog and artist information magazine. The issue features twenty-four pages of information on Sabian cymbals, a section of playing tips (from drummers like Billy Cobham, Rod Morgenstein, Chad Smith, and Dave Abbruzzese), and the opportunity for readers to win a fifteen-piece cymbal setup identical to that of Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy. U.S.A. readers contact **Sabian Ltd., P.O. Box 693, Houlton, ME 04730**; Canadian and international readers contact **Sabian Ltd., Meductic, NB, Canada EOH 1LO**.

A new 1994-95 catalog—entitled *Sticks-N-Stones*—has just been published by **Pro-Mark**. In addition to outlining the company's sticks, brushes, and other accessories, the 24-page full-color catalog adds consumer educational information not dedicated specifically to Pro-Mark products. Included is a section on how to select sticks and a discussion of stick manufacturing methods. Drummers wishing to receive a catalog may call **Pro-Mark at (800) 822-1492**.

The **Ludwig** company has also released its 1994-95 color catalog. It presents the company's *Classic* and *Rocker* series outfits, individual drums, hardware, cases & bags, sticks, heads, drum finishes, and specialty items in a twenty-two-page full-color format. Contact your Ludwig dealer or write **Ludwig, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515-0310**.



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## READERS' PLATFORM

continued from page 6

truly an education and enlightenment for all who attended. I particularly enjoyed Chad Smith's inquiry as to whether there were any parents in the audience (and commenting that *his* were there) and that they should be commended for supporting their child's interest in drumming. It was great to see so many drummers together in one place sharing their common interest, knowledge, and enthusiasm with each other. Again, I applaud your program—you may even see me next year!

Susan Kuiken  
Bellvale, NY

I just returned from my first *MD* Festival Weekend. I was blown away, and so was my non-drumming girlfriend! I was fortunate enough to win a very nice door prize, but even for those who didn't there was so much valuable material available—free of charge! (*MD's First Year* and *Second Year* compilations were especially welcome.)

It may be a cliche, but "there was a lot of love in that room." I am honored to play an instrument that seems to attract such warm and exuberant people. I'll see ya there next year!

Mark Beckner  
Louisville, KY

## PORK PIE CLARIFICATION

Thank you for the story on my company in the July '94 issue. Response has been great. However, I would like to clarify a couple of points where I don't think I was clear enough and might have misled your readers. I mentioned that I use certain parts on my drums that come from Taiwan. I should not have said that DW, GMS, and Montineri use the same parts. I don't know where they get all of their parts. I use these parts because I have not been able to find an American supplier and/or because of cost reasons. The parts that do come from Taiwan are of the highest quality and any part that doesn't make the grade is scrapped. This is a practice that any company manufacturing high-quality gear employs—whether the parts are European, Japanese, Taiwanese, or American.

Bill Detamore

President  
Pork Pie Percussion  
Woodland Hills, CA

## DRUMMERS OF CUBA

Having just returned from Cuba, I received several calls regarding the article I co-wrote with Chuck Silverman and Richie Garcia ("The Drummers Of Cuba," June

'94) and rushed out to buy one. I thank *Modern Drummer* for taking an interest in our story, and for having the vision to feature it.

There are two minor flaws I'd like to point out to your readers. First, while I'm not the greatest photographer in the world, photo credits would still be nice! Chuck, Richie, and I did what we could with instant cameras and poor lighting; hopefully next time we can hire a real photographer. Second, Pablo Menendez (director of Grupo Mezcla) is *not* a drummer, but this is never made clear in the bio. He is, of course, very knowledgeable about the developments in Cuban music and education, and is a dear friend of mine.

For those who wish to pursue further information on Cuban drumming and/or music, there are several ways to travel to Cuba to attend summer workshops and music festivals. I recommend contacting the Center for Cuban Studies in New York (124 W. 23rd St., New York, NY 10011, [212] 242-0559) or Marazul Tours, Inc., (250 W. 57th St., Suite 1311, New York, NY 10107, [800] 223-5334).

Rebeca Mauleon-Santana  
San Francisco, CA

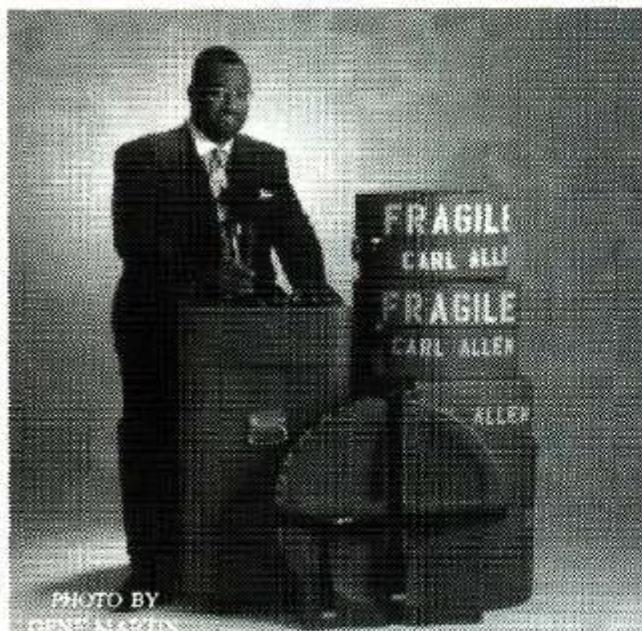


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# Max Roach: "Blues For Big Sid"

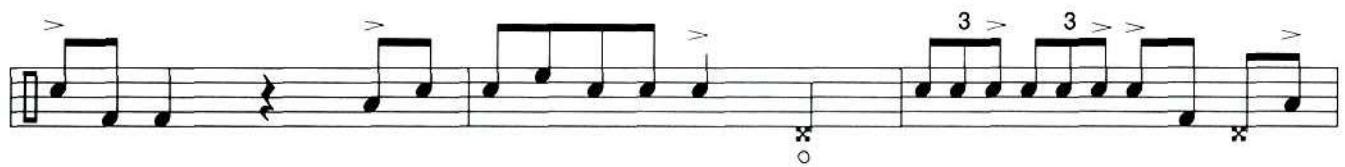
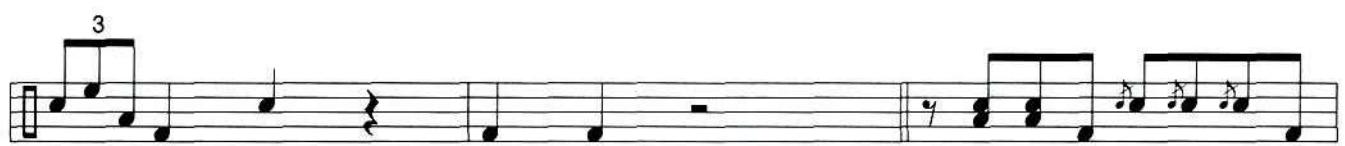
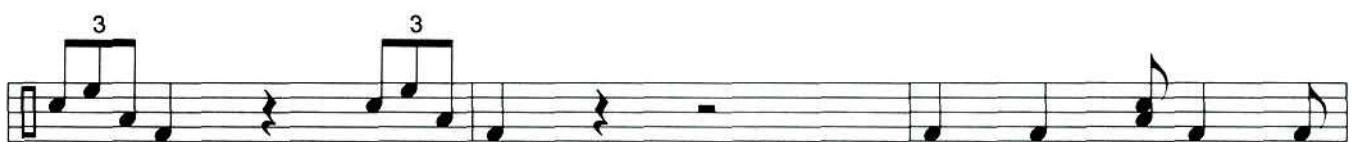
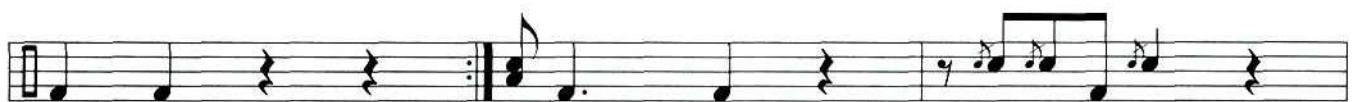
Transcribed by Craig Scott

This month's *Drum Soloist* features "Blues For Big Sid" by the great Max Roach (from Max's *Blue* album, Atlantic AMCY 1043), a piece inspired by and written for Sid Catlett. Max beautifully plays the melodic theme—which should be instantly recognizable to most drummers—and then comes up with interesting variations. It's a classic solo composed by one of our true geniuses.



$\text{d} = 125$

Repeat 3X



A 10-line musical score for snare drum, featuring six staves of 16th-note patterns. The score includes various performance markings such as accents (>), triplets (3), and specific symbols (x, o, V) placed above or below the notes.

The first staff consists of six measures of eighth-note patterns. The second staff begins with a measure of eighth notes followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs. The third staff features a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs, and concludes with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note and a triplet marking (3).

The fourth staff starts with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs with a bass drum note, and ends with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note and a triplet marking (3).

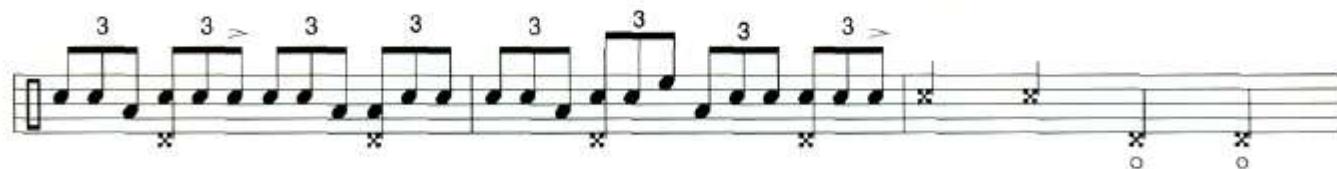
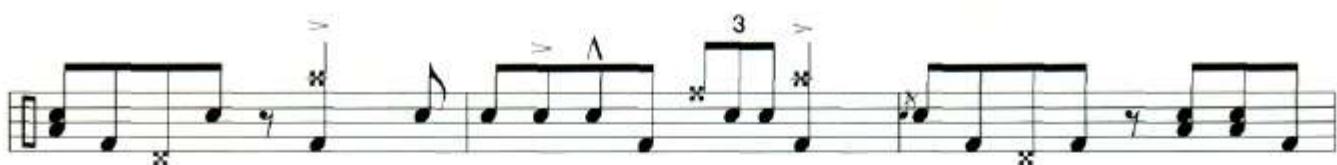
The fifth staff begins with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs with a bass drum note, and ends with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note and a triplet marking (3).

The sixth staff consists of six measures of eighth-note patterns. The seventh staff begins with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs with a bass drum note, and ends with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note and a triplet marking (3).

The eighth staff consists of six measures of eighth-note patterns. The ninth staff begins with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs with a bass drum note, and ends with a measure of eighth notes with a bass drum note and a triplet marking (3).

The tenth staff consists of six measures of eighth-note patterns.







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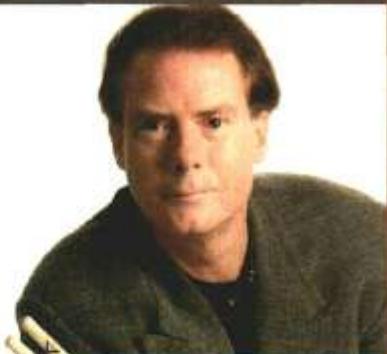
# Vater Straight Talk

Independent Artist • Fusion

Joey Heredia



Michael Shrieve



Independent Artist • Fusion

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Studio Great • 5A

Mike Baird



"I've played all the stick brands out there, and Vater's balance and consistent quality is incredible. You couldn't pay me to use another stick."

Tal Bergman



Billy Idol • 5B

"Integrity, consistency, and balance - what's good in a man is good in a stick. And Vater has it every time."

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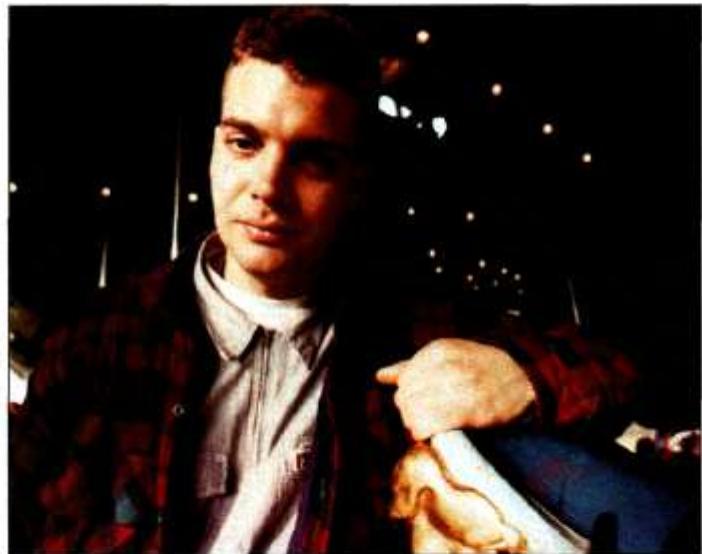
# John Stanier Of Helmet

by Ken Micallef

*John Stanier waves to me from across Broome Street in lower Manhattan. He's exhausted from recording Helmet's latest album, Betty. Tall and sleepy-eyed, the drummer leads me into the labyrinthine quarters of their large studio, then dashes off for a quick shower. A Tama drumkit sits at one end of the room, amps at the other—a typical practice space. Hip hop blasts from a boombox. Iced tea bottles and empty bags of Doritos clutter a table. A Brazilian psychedelic poster on the wall announces "HELMETIN SAO PAULO"—yet another comer of the world where this "alternative heavy metal" quartet sell a lot of records.*

*Helmet's unusual hard rock—as heavy as a hurricane but swirling with undeniable melody—was cast in iron on 1992's Meantime. With Stanier and bassist Henry Bogdan lock-stepped against Page Hamilton's syncopated guitar riffage, Helmet resembled a nuclear-hot fission of shifting gears and oozing steam. Signs that the band were changing became apparent on two popular soundtracks: Judgment Night (with rappers House Of Pain) and the mega-selling The Crow. Noise, noise, and more noise heaped atop hip hop grooves and distorted vocals were the ethic. Betty solidifies that concept, with Helmet (now including guitarist Rob Echeverria) playing more funk, adding more noise, exploring weird, cascading guitar harmonies, and generally searching for a more experimental sound.*

*Stanier's staccato drumming is a Helmet mainstay. His style is the result of his combined love of punk, hip hop, and Neil Peart. Brought up on the disciplined, super-chops approach of drum corps, Stanier brings a street approach to Helmet's brainy brawn. His brutal-yet-funky groove is as important to Helmet as are singer/guitarist Page Hamilton's much-ballyhooed jazz credentials. Songs such as "I Know" and "Milquetoast" are pure Stanier, full of riveting beats and tom-toms on the verge of shattering under Stanier's rim shots. "Beautiful Love" is a study in destroying a jazz standard with free-noise-metal, while "Wilma's Dream" is bruised and ominous. With the assistance of T Ray ("not really our producer; more of a spiritual guru"), Stanier's bass drum punches out front-and-center on Betty, just like the sampled hip hop bass drum currently ruining your speakers at home. And Stanier's high-pitched, tweaked snare drum is still cutting through the fabric of guitars and noise.*



*Photo by Melanie Nissen*

*We begin our interview by letting John read Vinnie Paul's (of Pantera) disparaging remarks concerning his snare drum sound in a recent installment of MD's Impressions...*

**JS:** Hmmm. It's funny...people make such a big deal out of the snare drum sound. It's just rim shots and having the snare head tight. It's not even as tight as it used to be. I used to freak out because it was giving me shocks in my forearm. I was using those Falams heads; they're bulletproof. I can use one for an entire tour, but they go really flat. The snare drum turns into a pipe. My snare sounds weird on Meantime because [producer] Andy Wallace was mixing half my snare drum sound and then triggering in a wood snare drum sound. On Betty the snare is closely miked. In fact, the whole kit is really well-recorded. The bass drum is kicking—but I had to fight for that. I had a wooden beater and a pad on the bass drum head and I tuned the head really tight, so the sound is total attack. I've always considered the kick drum to be a drum. So many people view the kick drum differently. I just think of it as a big tom that you happen to be playing with your foot. In some really well-known bands you can't hear the bass drum. You can feel it, but that doesn't cut it.

**KM:** *Betty* is a departure from *Meantime*. What's the story behind that?

**JS:** First of all, we were really rushed. We'd been on the road literally for eighteen months. We milked *Meantime* dry. We didn't have any songs written for the new album, then all sorts of catastrophes started happening in the studio. I was going through some



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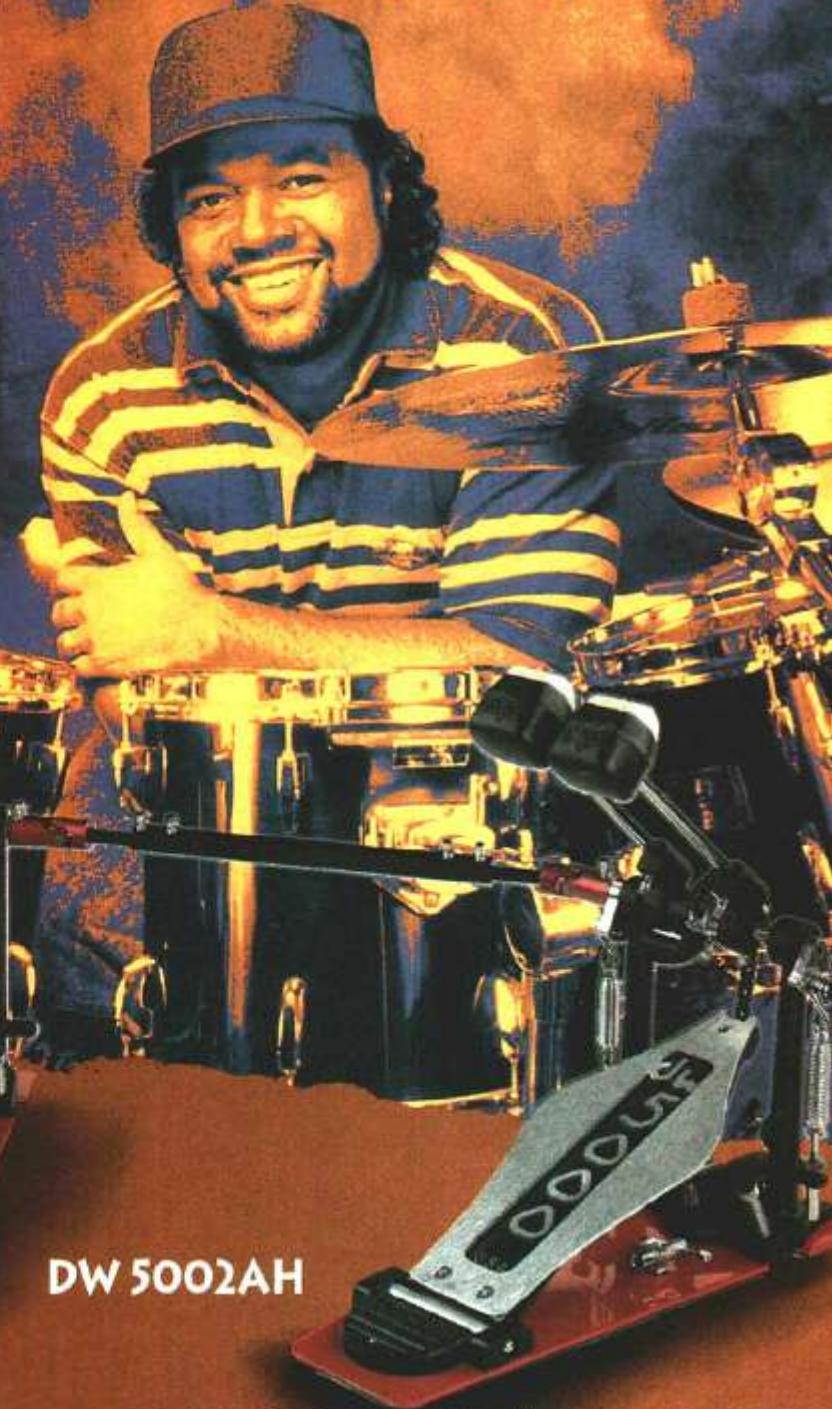
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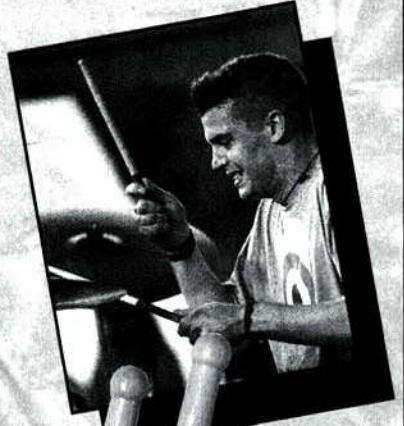
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horrible personal things, too. I'm really surprised that *Betty* came out so well. It would have been easy to do *Meantime II*.

**KM:** There are no fills on *Betty* like the ones you took on "FBLA II" from *Meantime*.

**JS:** There is one—which I call "the stupidest fill in the world"—on "I Know." But I didn't know what else to play. I did it at first as a joke, but then I realized that it works. There are some Neil Peart ripoffs on there, too. I heard Rod Morgenstein say once that he rips off fills all the time. So why not?

**KM:** Are you particularly happy with any one performance on *Betty*?

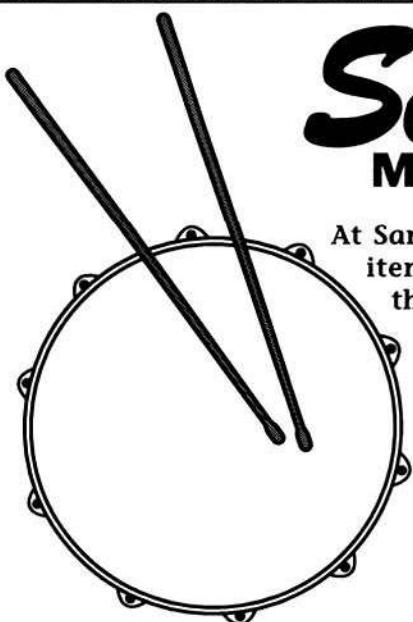
**JS:** I like "Street Crab" a lot. That actually has a lot of drum fills, even though I did generally hold back on the fills this time out. I'm starting to learn more about the value of that. I used to go nuts; now I'm starting to learn the taste aspect.

*Betty* is not as dark as *Meantime* overall. In fact, the whole album is full of inside

jokes—like "Beautiful Love," for example. On that I was playing by myself without the band, then the other guys added their parts. It sounds like a traffic jam. Anybody who thinks that that song is a real interpretation of a jazz standard is a fool.

**KM:** Does Helmet write songs as a band?

**JS:** Page walks in with the structure. But I'm usually left to myself to figure out what I'm going to play. Page always says—and I agree—that we're just getting started. There is so much more in us as a band. This album is different for many reasons, including some weird subliminal ones. It's almost like a new band, with a totally different vibe. And we've become better players. But I was so rushed that I had to come up with most of my parts literally on the spot. I had never done that before. A good number of the songs were learned a day before we recorded them. And I hate being in the studio: The pressure is on and you have to be perfect with



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every note. This record has a lot of little flubs—which I think is cool, actually. I'm starting to hate these "perfect" drummers more and more. It's just flaccid.

**KM:** How do you reconcile your hip hop influences with the metal of Helmet?

**JS:** It's a combination of using things I keep in my head—I've listened to hip hop for a long time—and doing what Helmet does. With a band like Helmet, it either fits or it doesn't. The arrangements can be different, but it's still Helmet. It's almost like there are rules. I have a role to fill in the band.

**KM:** Is that role one of brute force or more an artistic one?

**JS:** It's kind of brute force—but not all the time. I'll admit, I'm not a dynamics kind of guy. When it all boils down I'm just a punk drummer. Playing really hard is what I like.

**KM:** And yet your biggest influence is...?

**JS:** Neil Peart. I don't care what anybody says and I don't care how unfashionable it is. People say they hear a lot of Bonham in my playing—and I loved Zeppelin—but I think Peart took drumming to another level that no one else has matched yet. But on the other hand, I hate double-bass; it's corny.

**KM:** While we're talking about style and technique, yours is partly a product of the drum corps scene, isn't it?

**JS:** Yeah, the Florida Wave, from Fort Lauderdale. But I never officially marched. I would always try out and get the spot—usually on quads or quints—but at the last minute I wouldn't be able to march. I'd learn the whole show then have to back out after three or four months. I also went to the University of Florida, which is the home of Sun Coast Sound, and they fueled my love of marching corps, too.

Drum corps playing gets your chops *killing*. We'd do long rolls for forty-five minutes; our hands would be on fire. I'll admit that a lot of it—color guard, the uniforms—is really corny, and the judging is so anal-retentive that you'll get points taken off if your sticks are slightly out of unison among twelve drummers. But the drum parts are amazing.

**KM:** Do you still use those routines to warm up?

**JS:** No. In fact I don't even warm up—which is really bad. When I think about

what I'd do when I was growing up—the stretches alone.... Now it's wake up and hit the stage. The first five shows of any tour are hell for me. I can't even move my neck, I'm so tight. My hands get butchered because I get blisters that don't have time to heal. I tape my hands up with duct tape to cut back on the sweat.

**KM:** Have you had a chance to do any projects outside of the band?

**JS:** No. Helmet is like...life...it's all-consuming. [laughs] After playing with a band like Helmet—which tours so much and works so hard—when we have time off the last thing I want to think about is another band. I'm taking a break now, then we tour Europe, then the States with the Rollins Band, then back to Europe, then to Australia and New Zealand with the Beastie Boys, then Japan and Hawaii, then the U.S. again. Last year I got one day off for Christmas. Let's see if my parents still recognize me this year!



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AARON COMESS

continued from page 25

There are a couple of new songs on the album that we did work more on in the studio. And there were a few songs that we didn't expect to be on the album at all that we just decided to do.

**TS:** *Turn It Upside Down* is even more sparsely produced than the last album. Your drums are sounding more prominent and up-front than on the previous album.

**AC:** We were very lucky to hook up with producer Peter Denenberg. The production credits read: "Produced by Spin Doctors, Peter Denenberg, and Frankie La Rocka." Frankie is not just a drummer but also our A&R guy at the record company, which is really cool because he's not at all like the usual A&R guys who know nothing about music. Frankie was in bands and played on records and was out on the road prior to all this, and he understands music and he understands that we want to retain the rawness, so it was great working with him. He's really inspiring. Peter's great, too, because he knows how to make my drums sound exactly as I want them to sound. It's a very natural sound and we recorded this album in a medium-sized room here in New York City.

**TS:** The band comes across so live and real on record.

**AC:** All four of us play together live, and a good amount of this record was done live. The whole band went in and recorded to get the drum parts because you really can't overdub drums unless you're going digitally. Then Mark would listen back to his bass parts to see if there was anything he wanted to fix, although he left the bulk of his stuff. Eric did a lot of second guitar parts and acoustic guitar parts, but most of his original stuff was what was used. The same thing with Chris. We didn't want it to sound like an overly polished record, so we just whipped through it.

**TS:** The band doesn't seem to take anything too seriously, with the exception of the music.

**AC:** That's the attitude we have. There's nothing more serious in my life than music, but at the same time, it's still only music, it's still only a record. I devote my life to this band and to making records, and in ten years, this record will hopefully sound like us. The more you can reserve in

spontaneity and sound, the better, so why slave over it? I could drive myself nuts doing things over and over. The point is to have fun, and the second that you're not having fun, it's not worth it anymore. Why do something twenty times in a row? It doesn't matter that much. I can deal with mistakes. I listen to the first record and I think it has a good energy to it, but I can hear mistakes all over it that maybe some people may not notice but others might. The same with the new record, but I like that. You listen to Stones records and there are mistakes all over them, but they're so alive and *real*. That's what makes them great. I get so bored listening to these sterile albums with picture-perfect drumming.

**TS:** "Big Fat Funky Booty" off *Turn It Upside Down* is underscored by your bass drum work. When I think of your playing, what immediately comes to mind is your snare attack and your cymbal work, not necessarily your bass drum.

**AC:** We wanted to keep the bottom a little heavier on this record. "Big Fat Funky Booty" is a song *about* bottoms, so you might as well put a lot of bottom-end on it. [laughs] But the low-end can really make a

song powerful, especially with a song like that. We really tried to get a good tonal balance between the bass guitar and the bass drum this time around. The last time we recorded was our first time making a record. Four years have gone by since then, and we've gotten better. There were little things that we tried to tweak this time around.

**TS:** Speaking of the studio, I wonder if you ever actually used a click track, because your meter is so spot on.

**AC:** I never used one in my life until this album, for the song "Laraby's Gang," which is kind of Beatle-esque. When I was growing up I practiced with a metronome all the time, and this was basically the same thing.

That particular song was a challenge for me. It was one of the songs we worked on a bit because it was new. There's nothing harder than playing slow tempos, so Frankie put on a click track and said, "Try this." If they had told me that I was going to be working with a click track before I walked into the control room, I would've said, "Forget it." But it was cool and it was fun. I don't think we'll use one a lot, but

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for that track it was a challenge to try to lock into it and just stay right in the pocket. I think a lot of people consider it insulting to their time. But there's nothing wrong with using one.

I believe that music should have good, solid time. The more I mature as a player the more I realize that there's a difference between perfect time and human time, and I think some songs are *meant* to speed up or slow down. If you listen closely to this record, there may be moments where things slow down or speed up, and that's totally cool. But this particular song sounded like it should be held right in the pocket, so I'm psyched that we used a click because it worked so well.

**TS:** It's funny that a lot of drummers talk about using a click in a confessional tone.

**AC:** People can get very uptight about time. But listen to Tony Williams. He's one of my favorite drummers. His time is by no means metrically perfect, yet it is perfect in that it's totally human. The Miles Davis Group of the '60s—with Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, and Tony—had their own sense of time, the way they all moved together.

That's the beautiful thing about it. The beauty of a band like ours is that after playing together for five years, we've learned how to follow each other. For a time when I was younger, I was really paranoid about having to have perfect time. The older I get, the less I'm concerned with that stuff and the more concerned I am with the feeling I'm trying to convey.

**TS:** You mentioned how a band follows each other through playing together, which brings to mind your working relationship with Mark White. You two are so locked in that it seems organic and intuitive.

**AC:** After five years playing together, it's almost like an unconscious thing—it just kind of happens. We rarely sit down and say, "I'm gonna do this rhythm, so why don't you do that one?" It's really more of a natural thing. I'm listening to what he's doing, he's listening to what I'm doing, and normally my bass drum will work off of what he's playing. A lot of times my snare drum will work off of Eric and my hi-hat might work off of Chris, but it's all blended in together, and I'll try to match myself up with different parts of the band.

You can think of the drumset as a band in itself, and I've worked all my life getting it to sound like one instrument as opposed to four separate instruments. It's the same thing with the band: We're four instruments but we want our band to sound like one. It's like the old saying: You can put four of the world's best musicians in a room and then four of the worst in a room, and sometimes the worst musicians will sound better together than the best.

It's the same thing for people who aren't in a band: If you're going to a gig with people you've never played with before, it requires a lot of give and take, and you have to be able to adapt very quickly to the other musicians. The goal is to make good music. It's not to show off. It's all about making one good sound between everybody. Unfortunately, sometimes people forget that.

**TS:** Did you ever go through that egocentric phase?

**AC:** I always studied and took lessons, and I learned how to read while I was still young. I was lucky enough to study with teachers like Henry Oxtell, who always felt that playing music was the most

# THE WALL

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important thing. Practicing is great, but when you get on stage, you have to forget about what you learned that day and just concentrate on playing music. I'm sure I'm guilty of playing something that I learned that day just to see if I could pull it off. But for the most part, that's just not music. There are people who just practice eight hours a day and never get out to play with other musicians. You have to find a balance, because ultimately music is about people playing together.

**TS:** Did your love of jazz begin at home?

**AC:** Originally I was just into rock—KISS, Led Zeppelin, the Who. As I got a little older my brother started listening to Zappa and I started to get into that and then Chick Corea and the whole fusion thing. By high school I got into straight-ahead jazz, which I think was due to the fact that I went to a performing arts high school. My brother had gone there, and he always used to bring home these great musicians that I'd get to jam with, which was really good for me. In school I got to play in a combo and in a big band every day, so I really got into jazz. I started discovering guys like Miles Davis, John

Coltrane, and Thelonious Monk, and I just fell in love with the music.

**TS:** Many drummers will talk about getting into jazz at an early age. But jazz can be difficult for most young people in that it is much more abstract than pop music.

**AC:** I actually enjoyed playing and listening to it. It's a really challenging music to play while you're growing up in that you can't just play a beat and get away with it. You have to understand that the forms are different, and if you want to take a solo then you have to keep that specific form in your head. A lot of drummers don't take on the responsibility of understanding harmony, just as some other musicians don't bother to understand rhythms. The fact is that it's everybody's job to keep the time, not just the drummer's. Rock, blues, jazz, and R&B are all different musics, but the similarity in them is about finding a feel and laying down a foundation. Until you can establish the groove, you shouldn't go off and do other things.

**TS:** Sounds like you're a great believer in learning the rudiments of drumming. A lot of great drummers feel that approach is crucial to playing, while other equally tal-

ented ones never studied rudiments.

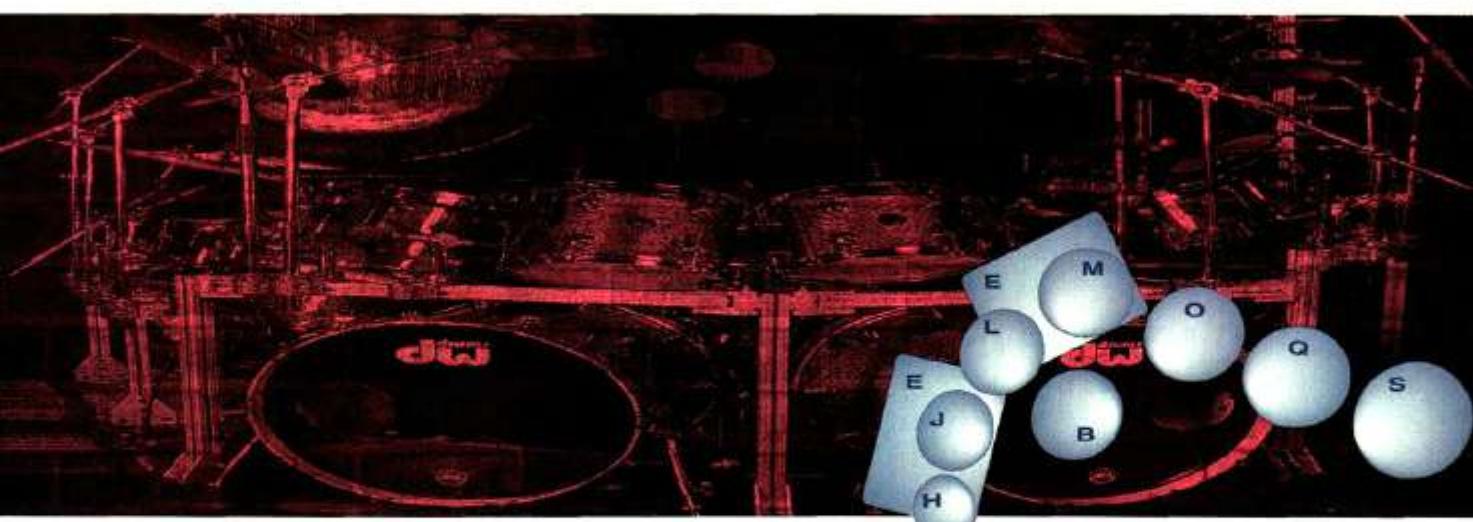
**AC:** All the technical stuff is just a foundation to express yourself. It's true that some of the greatest drummers have never taken a lesson and couldn't play a paradiddle, but that doesn't matter. I believe that there's a million different paths you can take to get to a comfortable point, and I'm not even saying that I'm near where I want to be. What *I am* saying is that the technical side of things is just a way to achieve what you hear in your head.

I started out playing a practice pad for two years. I took drum lessons from a guy in Dallas named Jack Iden, and he wouldn't let me get a drumset for two years. I would go in there complaining to him that I wanted a drumset, and he would say, "Just work on your rudiments, keep playing the pads, and get the snare drum down." I'm glad I listened to him, because by the time I got a drumset I had a little facility in my hands.

**TS:** How old were you when you finally got a kit?

**AC:** I started playing when I was nine and I got a drumset when I was about twelve. I played along to records and took some

# OF SOUND.



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lessons. I was lucky to have played in the band at school and to have had those jam sessions at my house to just let loose.

There were always so many good drummers in Dallas, and each player was great in a different way. One guy would be great at jazz, another would be amazing at blues and R&B. It was great to be around all of that.

**TS:** You have a lot of R&B influences in your playing.

**AC:** My friend Kenny Stern turned me on to guys like Jim Keltner and Bernard Purdie, and that has become a major influence on my drumming. With Spin Doctors, that R&B style is the attitude that I take on a lot of the songs. I'm definitely not a straight-ahead thrashy rock drummer. The groove and the feel are the most important things to me, and that really does stem from R&B drumming and from Purdie. I learned so much from him. His whole thing with me was feel, attitude, and playing the song.

**TS:** So Purdie drew those elements out of you?

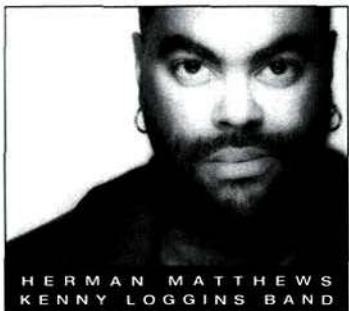
**AC:** I think when I came to New York I had a pretty decent musical sensibility and

a good amount of technique, but I was lacking in a certain attitude towards music, especially with playing softly. He zeroed me in on song playing and sounds. He's very conscious of the way you hit the cymbals, the different sounds you can get out of the drumkit, and the balance between the instruments. A lot of times I wasn't thinking so much about the bass drum volume in relation to the snare and the cymbal. There's a lot you can do between your limbs—the hi-hat can be louder, the bass drum can be louder—and he helped me home in on those things, which I hadn't been previously conscious of.

He was great, but he had the weirdest style of teaching. I had been used to learning out of books and from doing technical exercises, but we didn't do any of that. We'd spend most of the hour talking, and he'd have me play and then make comments. A lot of what he'd tell me wouldn't hit me until a year later. At first I didn't always understand the impact of what he'd tell me, but later on in life I've come to understand how much sense it all makes.

**TS:** You play with a light touch, but not at

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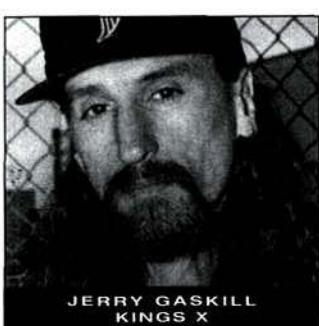
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the expense of power.

**AC:** I have made a conscious effort to retain the same energy at a low volume, which I guess is more of a mental thing, because it's hard to keep the intensity high at a soft volume. I try to make it as easy as I can in that when I set up my drums, everything is close and tight. I'm not a real wild, flashy drummer.

**TS:** You play a relatively small kit.

**AC:** Yeah, it's pretty small. I use a six-piece out on the road. I've never been a real heavy hitter, although there are songs I do hit hard on. I guess I've always liked the subtleties.

**TS:** Ghost notes are a subtle yet significant component of your sound. They lend a danceability to the overall musical vibe.

**AC:** Ghost-stroking actually came out of a bad habit I had. I had this lazy left hand that would lay on the snare drum, and one of my teachers—Henry Oxtell—pointed it out to me. He asked me if I was consciously doing all that "diddle" stuff with my left hand, and I realized that I wasn't. Purdie is really great at that, and it's a cool thing to hear. It's an undercurrent thing that is more of what you feel than you hear. I

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finally learned to pick my stick up off the head, too.

**TS:** We talked earlier about how you and Mark work together in the rhythm section, but I wanted to get your comments on how the two of you sync up parts, especially when you're playing such syncopated rhythms and filling in those beats with ghost notes.

**AC:** It's almost like playing with a percussionist, because he also does a lot of ghost stroking. He has an interesting technique with his thumb. There are a lot of percussive notes he plays in between the notes, which is very cool.

**TS:** Another aspect of your playing is that you use traditional grip. Most players from your generation play matched.

**AC:** Since day one I've played traditional. That first teacher I studied with started me with it. The traditional grip seemed like the weirdest way to hold sticks for so long—you feel awkward trying to play like that until you get used to it. That's the only reason I play that way, and now it's very comfortable. These days if I really want to hit hard or get a different sound, I might switch over. I find myself going

back and forth for different things. But I've always just done it that way.

**TS:** Another cool element that you've been able to expose to the masses with Spin Doctors is odd meters.

**AC:** On the last album, the song "Refrigerator Car" has a 9/8 intro. I was hanging out at Chris's house one night and we were talking about writing something in 9/8, and I came up with this riff on the guitar. When we went into the studio, I ended up playing the same riff on the drums, and then the band came in with it.

The one thing about odd meters is that I try to make them flow and not make them really choppy, which is hard. To achieve the flow on that tune, I did a thing on the ride cymbal that goes over the bar: I played on every other beat. So it starts on the off beats: 2, 4, 6, 8, and the next time around it's on 1, 3, 5, 7, 9. It almost gives it a four feel because you have this constant beat going as opposed to that choppy-ness that breaks it up. I love playing odd times.

**TS:** Your place is littered with guitars, and you have a piano in your bedroom. What is it about drums that allow you to express

yourself above and beyond any other instrument?

**AC:** I had taken classical piano lessons for a few years when I was real young, but I guess that drums were an instinctual, natural thing for me. I love playing piano, bass, and guitar, and I think being able to play those a bit really helps my drumming. Still, I definitely think I can express myself musically the most on drums. I also think drummers have the most camaraderie of all musicians. I've rarely felt a negative vibe from another drummer.

**TS:** That brings to mind your recent jam with the Allman Brothers.

**AC:** Oh yeah. That was unbelievable. I love the Allman Brothers and I've listened to them for a long time. We opened up for them a couple of years ago. Jaimoe and Butch Trucks are just unbelievable drummers. When they played here in New York recently, I was sitting behind the stage, just watching the show. All of a sudden Jaimoe handed me some sticks and said, "Do you want to play?" That was the last thing I expected. It was a thrill. I love playing with two drummers. I've been playing a Monday night gig down at a club

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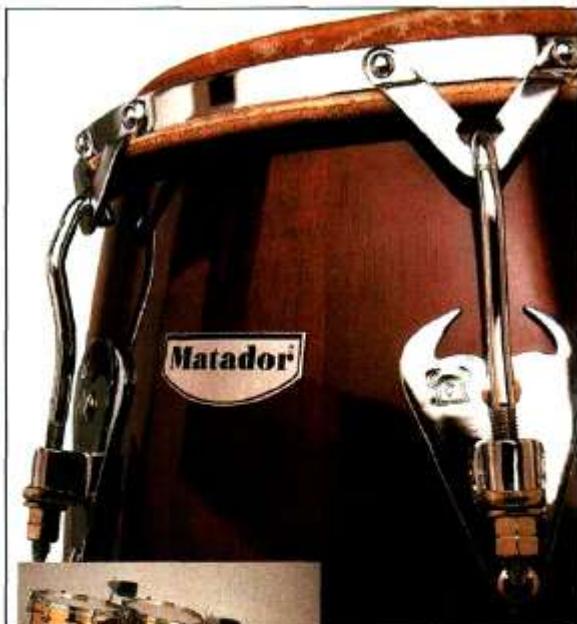


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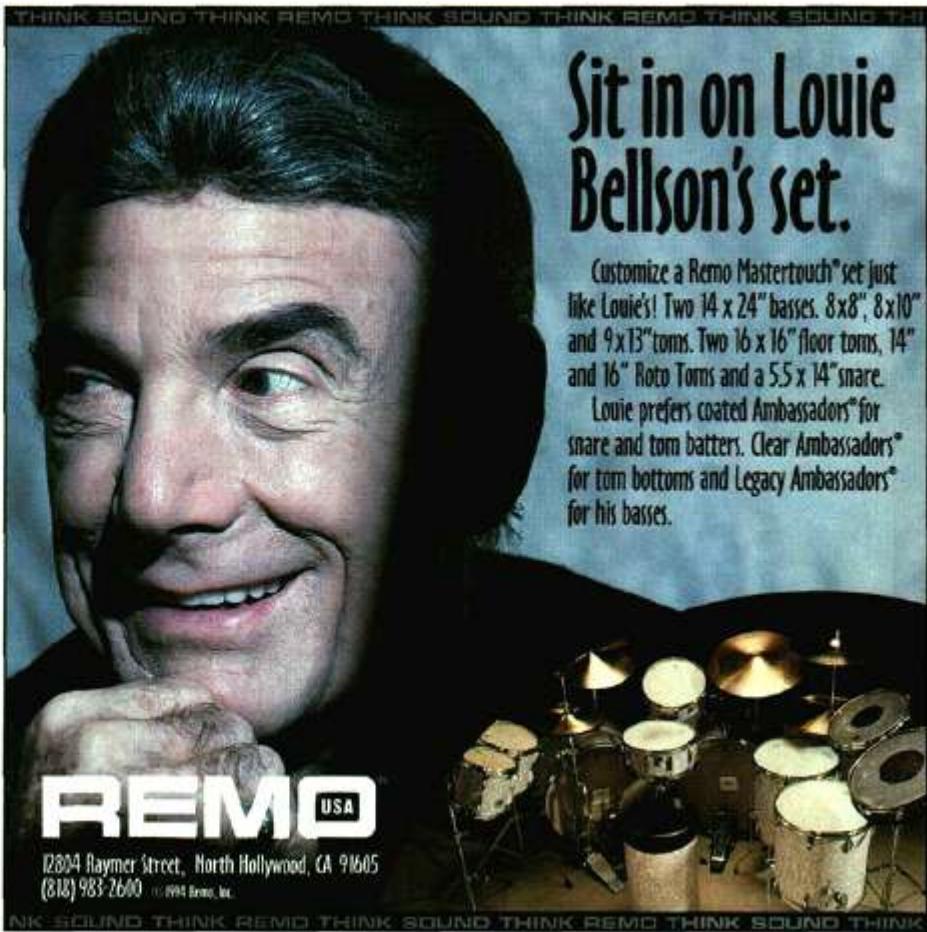
called The Cooler, and we always use two drummers, which has been really cool for me.

**TS:** Do you play with all types of drummers for that gig?

**AC:** Pretty much. I play with jazz guys, funk drummers, reggae drummers. It's so great. I've learned so much from those guys because, once again, you have to be willing to adapt. Some drummers are very dominant, and you have to adjust. For me, the ultimate goal is to make it sound good. So if someone is playing more dominantly, I'll adapt. My favorite way is when everybody is listening to each other and adapting to each other, and you find the middle ground and become like one drummer. That's the ultimate thing. That's how Butch and Jaimoe in the Allman Brothers play—and the Grateful Dead drummers, too, except that they're looser. I've always had a great time playing with other drummers and percussionists.

**TS:** The Monday night gig you mentioned at The Cooler consists of a rather large band, doesn't it?

**AC:** It's huge: a full horn section, a couple of guitarists, two bass players, and two



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drummers. It's a fun, improvisational gig.

With the time off after the last Spin Doctors tour, I've also been doing gigs around New York with a group called Wasabe, which consists of Eric and Mark from Spin Doctors, plus Arnie and Eric Lawrence, who are sax players, John Popper, who plays harmonica in Blues Traveler, and Renny Lopez, who sings and plays percussion. That's a fun gig as well because we just get up there and go for it and just jam and make up songs.

It's been a refreshing period for me because after playing with the band on the road for so long, by the end of the tour I had lost my perspective. It was really hard for me to tell if I sounded good anymore because we were playing the same things. We try as hard as we can to keep things fresh and to shake things up, but when you've been doing it for so long you don't know how you sound anymore. Having this time off to explore these situations has been refreshing. I've come back to Spin Doctors revitalized!



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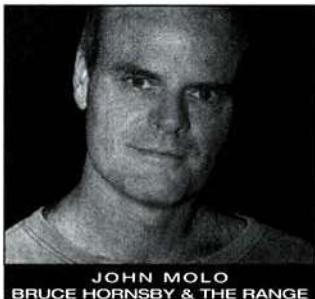


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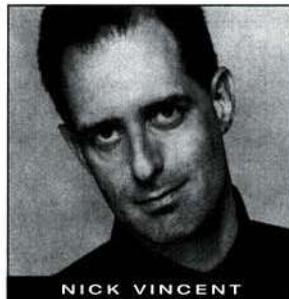
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# Focal Dystonia: A Personal Experience

by Charlie Perry with Jack Maher

*Even under optimal conditions, a musical instrument is always a demanding and unforgiving adversary. As a physician and part-time drummer, I know how common it is for musicians to have to play in the presence of pain and, if necessary, to modify their approach to the instrument to minimize the pain. Beyond this lies the devastating problem of loss of fine muscle control, which can write finis to an artistic career.*

*Charlie Perry's battle with the crippling effects of a poorly understood disease is an admirable story of intelligence and persistence in dealing with this mysterious and destructive disease. Charlie's combined psychological/training/performance modification method has the potential of wide application and deserves careful attention.*

Dr. Robert S. Litwak  
Mount Sinai Medical Center  
New York

Nothing is more terrifying to a drummer than the loss of use of the hands or feet. Functions that were taken for granted and performed mechanically are now labored, erratic, or frozen in muscle contraction.

The medical profession has ways of describing these symptoms. There is *overuse syndrome*, characterized by pain, swelling, weakness, and loss of dexterity—all possibly progressing to the inability to play at all. In *tendonitus*, the tendons attached to the muscles become irritated and inflamed. *Carpal tunnel syndrome* occurs when tendon and muscle swelling compresses the nerves passing through the wrist, resulting in weakness, pain, tingling, and numbness. *Focal dystonia* is the most severe of all the problems that fall into the cumulative trauma disorders. It cripples the performer in any number of heartbreakingly ways.

Although not very well understood, focal dystonia attacks the nervous system, causing it to lose the ability to control muscles. Victims included nineteenth-century composer/pianist Robert Schumann, whose disabling focal dystonia in his right hand brought his career as a pianist to an end.

My own bout with focal dystonia began in my early twenties. I found that I couldn't play a steady four-to-the-bar on the bass drum with my right foot. I could handle slow and moderate tempos, but my leg would cramp, tighten, and refuse to work at most fast tempos.

At the beginning, the problem came and went. I never knew whether my foot would function normally until I began playing.

But the problem went far beyond the physical ramifications. The effect on my confidence was shattering. Drumming had been easy for me, even as a youngster. This problem struck at the very core of my ability and threatened my capacity to earn a living.

The condition grew steadily worse as the years rolled by. Eventually it reached a point where I couldn't keep time in four at moderate tempos. Later, even playing four at slow tempos was beyond me. The problem placed such a burden on my hands and hi-hat foot that it diminished their skills as well. Oddly enough, at one point I was able to lock my bass drum foot into one fast tempo. Musicians remarked at my ability to play the bass drum in four so fast. Little did they know that I wasn't able to play in four—or even two—at any other tempo.

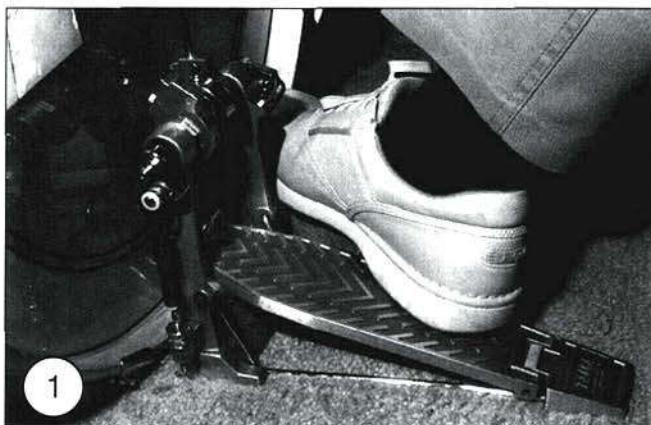
To compensate for these unsettling deficiencies, I adopted a style of playing that was just coming into vogue—bebop. In this style, the bass drum was not necessarily played four beats to the bar, but used as a third hand. Against the driving time of the ride cymbal, the bass drum was used to augment the rhythmic line, punctuating the accompaniment behind a soloist with "bombs" and short figures. The fact that small-group drummers of the day played and pioneered this style made it not only fashionable, but desirable as well.

In the midst of my dilemma, I became aware that other drummers were experiencing the same or similar problems. In fact, there were well-known jazz drummers who worked with small groups rather than big bands specifically because they couldn't play the bass drum in four with any authority. Kenny Clarke, known for his exceptionally good timekeeping, said that when tempos got too fast, he simply laid out with the bass drum except to drop bombs in the right places. Almost without exception, the leading drummers of the bop and cool eras used the bass drum only for accents and punctuations. I've always been of the opinion that at least some of them suffered, as I did, from focal dystonia.

It wasn't until two years ago that I realized my problem actually had a medical name. After reading about focal dystonia, I decided to devise my own program of rehabilitation. If I couldn't get rid of my condition entirely, I was determined to at least lessen it.

## Tackling The Problem

My rehabilitation began in 1992, and I recorded every step in a series of notebooks. Through trial and error, I developed a practice routine, incorporated psychological methods, and devised individual bass drum techniques. By using bilateral transfer—a mental/physical discipline that proposes that skills learned with



one hand are more easily learned with the other—I hoped to develop sufficient control of my left foot to play the bass drum in four. Since my left foot was not as impaired as my right, the idea was that once my left side became expert, it would transfer to the right. Unfortunately, this concept did not alleviate the focal dystonia. Though all the practice with my left foot improved my hi-hat technique, little of those skills were transferred to the right foot.

I'm a firm believer in the importance of correct psychological conditioning. So in addition to bilateral transfer, I used visualization techniques and a personal form of subconscious suggestion. I

placed myself in a playing frame of mind by seeing, feeling, and hearing the drums in my mind. At times, I even got the feel of the bass drum beater striking the head. To obtain the cooperation of my subconscious, I gave it easy, friendly commands. I addressed my inner mind by saying, "You will *have* to do it, because I can't find a solution to this problem any other way." At that point, I had decided to forget about resolving the task-specific focal dystonia. I had had *enough*. I was simply going to go on with my life. Coming to this decision removed an extremely heavy burden from my emotional state.

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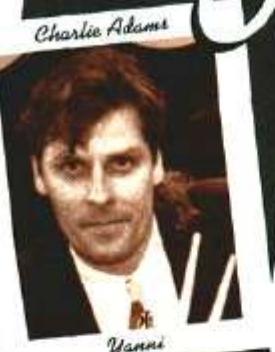
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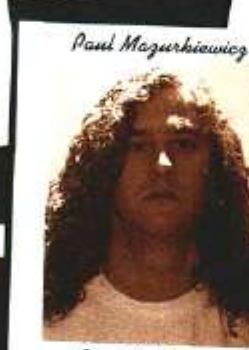


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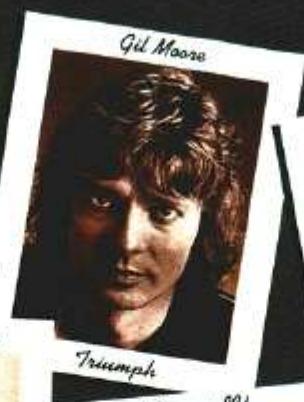
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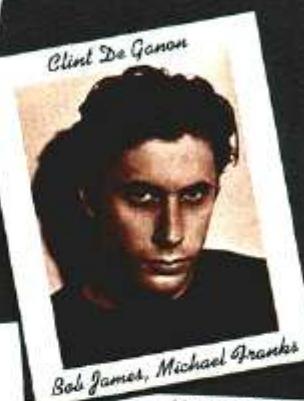
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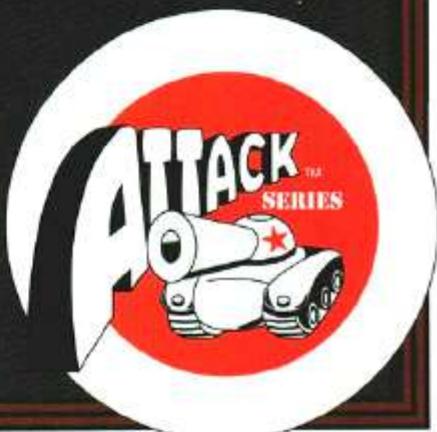


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### Finding The Answer

What followed next was most remarkable. Instead of (or maybe because of) the psychological conditioning providing the answer, a technical development appeared out of the blue. A radically new way of using my right foot supplied an answer.

In essence, what I now do is use the *heel* of my right foot on the pedal. I rest the ball and toes of my right foot on the rim of the bass drum, with my toes pressed lightly against the batter head. This puts the heel of my right foot in a slightly higher position than my toes, which thereby frees the heel to play comfortably and without anxiety. (See photo 1.) A small block of wood, about the size of a cassette box, is used for support under the portion of the foot that extends between the foot plate and the rim of the drum (photo 2). For want of another name, I call it the "new heel technique," since I have neither used it before nor heard of another drummer using it. To my complete delight, the new heel technique has allowed me to now play a variety of fast, moderate, and slow tempos *without* muscular cramping or loss of control. In essence—*no more focal dystonia*.

I hope my personal experience will be of assistance to other afflicted drummers in their battle to overcome the disabling effects of focal dystonia.

## Are You On The Move?

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## Expanding The Learning Process

by John Riley



### MUSIC KEY



A big factor in our growth as musicians is the emulation of those we admire. We do this by imitating or copying the things our idols play. The usual process involves playing along with a recording until we get the "thing" we're attracted to—the sound, the feel, the articulation, the sticking. Most people consider the effort a success once they can play something just like it is on the record. But that's just the *beginning*; you must integrate these new "things" into your vocabulary.

To speed up the integration process, I suggest writing out the ideas you are trying to assimilate. By writing out ideas you will not only learn them faster, you will be able to manipulate them and make them "your own." And that's something you can't really do when you play them from memory.

To illustrate how this concept works, I've written out some solos. Below are four bebop-style "fours" (four-measure solos), but this approach works regardless of style. If these "fours" were on a record and you learned them by ear, you could only play them one way—from beginning to end. Having them written down opens up a world of new applications that will help you *own* them.

Obviously the first step is to learn to play each phrase as it is. The stickings will help you get the proper flow. Play the hi-hat on 2 and 4 and play four measures of jazz time between each phrase, swinging the 8th notes. (The tempo can range on these anywhere between quarter note equals 120 and 220 beats per minute.)

### Example A

R R R LRLR L RLL RLRR LLLRLR RLLR R LRL

### Example B

R RR L RLRL R L R R R R R R R L L

### Example C

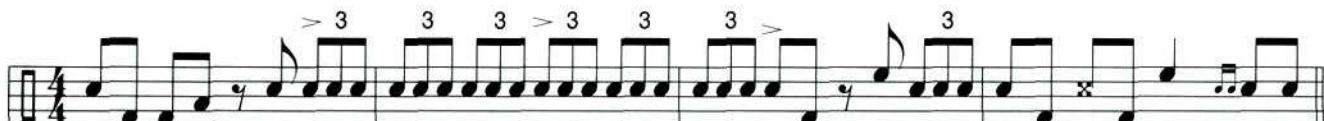
R RRL RRL R, R, R, L, R, RL, LR, RL, R, LRL

### Example D

R L RRL R, LRL, R, L, R, RL, R, L, R, RL

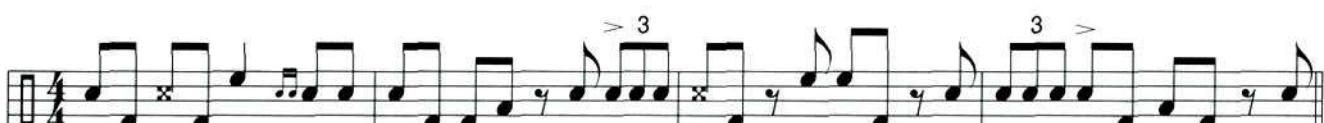
With some practice you should be able to play the phrases as well as you would if you'd learned them by ear. But let's go a little deeper in the hope that you will begin to make the phrases your own. Looking at phrase A, play it starting in the second measure. Play

A2, 3, 4, 1, in that order.



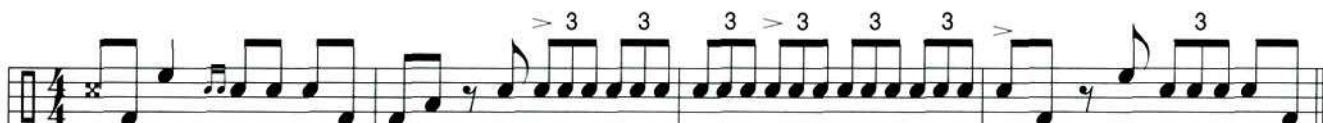
The phrase sounds and feels completely different. Now start on the third measure. Play A3, 4, 1,2. Start on the fourth measure: A4, 1, 2, 3. Mix it up. Play A1, 3, 4, 2 or 4, 3, 2, 1, and so on. Undoubtedly not every combination will be a "gem," but you will begin to learn and hear this new material more thoroughly and probably come up with some phrase that the originator would never have thought of. Now go through the same process with phrases B, C, and D.

The next step is to combine ideas from the different phrases. For example, play A1, A2, B1, and B2.



Now try A2, A3, C3, C4, or A1, B1, C1, D1, or D3, C2, A4, B2. The possibilities are almost endless.

Let's take it even further. Go back to phase A and modify it by making the *second* beat of measure one the "1" of the phrase. Play the hi-hat on the new 2 and 4.



Now start the phrase on beat 3...or beat 4...or measure two, beat 2.... Here's phrase D starting on measure two, beat 4.



The final result of this process is that you will sound like someone who has studied—but not *copied*—a particular player. You'll hear your *own* ideas. Consider what the possibilities are if you combine ideas from two different players from different idioms! You would begin to hear and play things that are completely unique, and that's the goal—to come from the tradition of great drummers that preceded you, but still sound like yourself. Good luck.

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## RECYCLING CRACKED CYMBALS

You can make some great specialty cymbals out of cymbals that have cracked, using only some tin snips and a grinding wheel or file. I've made many splash cymbals from cracked 16" and 18" crashes. "Icebell"-type cymbals can be made from crashes with big bells; splashes are best made from smaller-bell cymbals. All you need to do is find a circle the size that you want (a coffee can, plate, or lid). Make sure it's centered over your cracked cymbal, then trace around it with a felt marker. Cut it out with your snips, then grind or file the edges. This really works, and after all, when you're on a budget, who can afford \$50 to \$100 for splashes?

James Smith  
Nashville, TN



## MUFFLING BASS DRUM IMPACT

Here's a quick and easy way to soften your bass drum sound for those lower-volume gigs: Simply stretch an ordinary wrist sweatband over the beater on your bass drum pedal. This will help reduce the attack and volume without the hassle of having to re-tune or re-muffle the drum. When you're ready to switch back, pull the wristband off, throw it in your gear bag, and you're back to your original bass drum sound with minimal effort.

Chuck Orr  
Corpus Christi, TX



## BASS DRUM STOPS

Like any drummer, I've had to deal with nasty bass drum creep from time to time. On one gig I was having difficulty due to a marble floor. Spurs had no grip, and rubber feet didn't help either. I took some

packing rope that I had with me and cut it into pieces about 3" long. I applied a strip of duct tape to the floor at the point where the bass drum legs needed to go. Then I placed one piece of rope on top of each piece of tape, bending the rope into a half-circle. Finally, I covered the rope with another piece of duct tape. The result was two secure "chocks" for the drum, which very effectively kept it from sliding.

Brian Auten  
Techumseh, MI



## QUICK IMPACT PAD

Here's a great way to save some cash on those expensive bass drum heads. When the head becomes soft or dented where the beater strikes, cut a 3" by 3" flat section out of an empty plastic milk jug. Tape this "impact pad" onto the damaged area. (Glue does not work.) The bounce of a new head will be regained. I've also noticed that this gives a lot more punch to the drum sound. You can even try tuning down for even more projection and low end!

Alden Wong  
East Lansing, MI



## ALTERNATIVE HI-HAT MIKING

If you want your hi-hats to sound great when miked, try aiming the mic upward at a 90° angle toward the bottom hi-hat cymbal about 1/2" from the edge (instead of the traditional downward aim toward the top cymbal). This helps to isolate the hi-hat signal quite well (which your engineer will appreciate) and also eliminates just enough attack to make the hi-hats sound smooth and mellow. I've tried this with a variety of mic's and the results were always great.

Tom Saluzzi  
Brooklyn, NY



## HEEL-DOWN PEDAL TECHNIQUE

When I read tips from famous drummers

on how they play quick single-bass-drum patterns, they always reply that they play "heel up." As a result, I never see any tips for us "heel down" people. I've developed a technique that I call the "dribble method," because you dribble the pedal like a basketball.

Thrust down your toes like you would on a normal bass drum stroke. Stop the stroke half-way, allowing the beater to continue forward to strike the head. When the pedal is on its way back up, catch it half-way and strike again. It takes practice, but you can get to the point where you can do as many beats as you want in a row.

Nigel Sifantus  
Wayland, MA



## EASY STICK SELECTION

If you carry several sizes of sticks, buy four or five different colors of model-airplane paints (in the small jars). Dip the tip of the butt end of each stick into the color for that particular size. I found that filling the bottle cap about half-full and dipping the end of the stick into it coats just the right amount of the butt end so that the paint doesn't hit the heads even when the stick is played reversed. (Be sure to blot the paint so you won't have a blob or drip at the end of the stick.) Now you can easily grab the stick you want from your stick bag by color code.

Bill Lowe  
Charlottesville, VA



## INEXPENSIVE TRIGGER MIC'S

I own an Alesis D4 drum module. I was shocked at the price of triggers, so I tried building my own. My home-made drum-head triggers were functional but not durable; they only lasted one or two gigs.

A friend who runs sound for another band told me that microphones would work if I employed a high-impedance adapter. I tried Shure SM57s—and they proved to be too sensitive, even with the D4's sensitivity turned almost off. So I dug up some cheap cassette recorder

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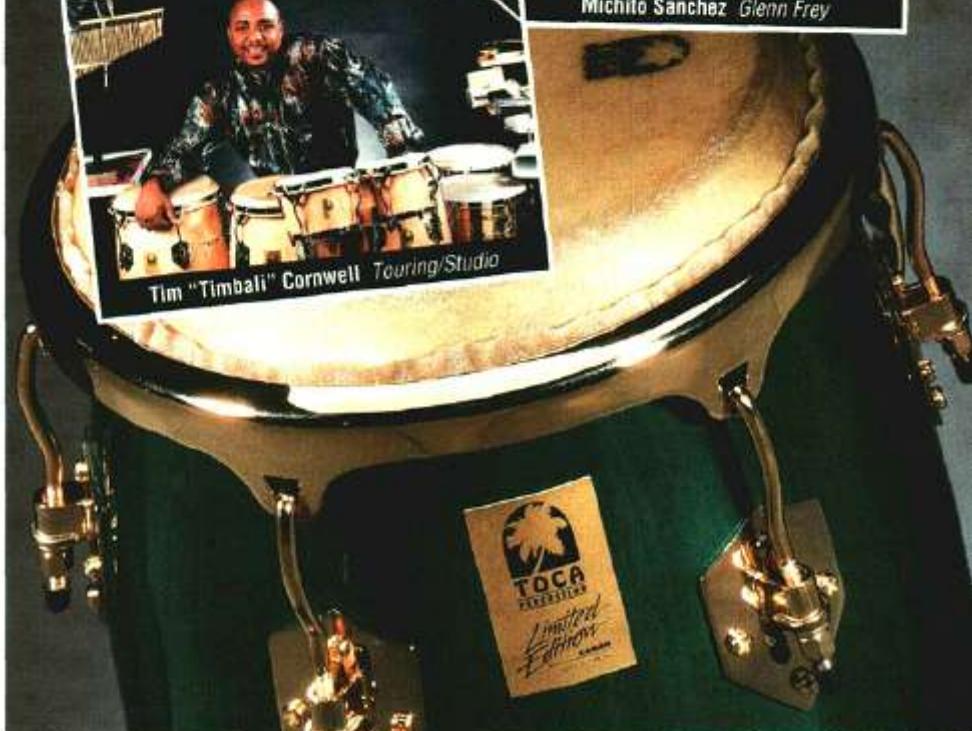
Rafael Padilla *Miami Sound Machine*



Michito Sanchez *Glenn Frey*



Tim "Timbali" Cornwell *Touring/Studio*



mic's—and they worked absolutely great! If you don't own any, you can usually pick them up at any electronics store for between \$5 and \$10. Besides triggering well, they give your kit that "live miked" look.

Kurt Michelson  
Roscommon, MI

### EMERGENCY SNARE HOLDERS

If you are ever in a bind for the strings or plastic strips that hold the snares on your snare drum, I have a good tip. One night, after breaking the strings on my snare, I grabbed a couple of full-sized plastic drinking straws from the bar. I used two and doubled them over. That was three years ago and I'm still on the same straws! I find that they work better than the plastic strips because they're a bit thicker—so now I use them on two other drums. Other drummers often chuckle at the sight of straws on a *Black Beauty*, but hey—what works, works!

Rex Owen  
Louisville, KY

*Note: The tips presented in Drumline are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Modern Drummer magazine. Modern Drummer cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any Drumline suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.*

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# Contemporary Triplets



by Rick Latham

## MUSIC KEY



In my last *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic* (July '94 MD) we looked at some 16th-note sticking patterns, which I referred to as "contemporary rudiments." Then we examined various ways of moving them around the set to create some nice grooves and fills. If you saw that article I'm sure you can see how valuable sticking patterns are. This is the reason to always keep the rudiments as part of your practice routine.

This time I'll give you some interesting triplet patterns to use in the same way. We'll look at a few hand patterns as well as a few that incorporate the bass drum. The same approach should be followed as before. Start the exercises slowly, paying close attention to the accents and the stickings. You will see how these triplets fit nicely into shuffle and half-time shuffle feels.

Remember, you want to make these exercises swing and feel natural. Listen to the sound of each stroke and make sure that they are balanced when switching from hand to hand.

**A:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > 3 3 > 3 >

Hand pattern: L R R L R R L L R L L R  
R L L R L L R R L R L R R L

**B:**

16th-note sticking pattern: 3 > 3 > > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: L L R L L R L R R L R R  
R R L R R L R L L R L L R

**C:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > > 3 > 3 >

Hand pattern: L R R L L R L R R L L R  
R L L R R L R L L R R L

**D:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > 3 > > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: L R R L L R L R R L R L  
R L L R R L R L L R R L

**E:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > > 3 > > 3

Hand pattern: L R L R L R R L R L L R  
R L L R R L R L L R R L

**F:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > > 3 > > 3

Hand pattern: L R L R L R R L R L L R  
R L L R R L R L L R R L

**G:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > > 3 > > 3

Hand pattern: L R L R L R R L R L L R  
R L L R R L R L L R R L

**A:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 3 > > 3 3 >

Hand pattern: R R L L R L L R R L R R L

**B:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 3 > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: R L R L R L R L R L R L

**C:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 3 > 3 > 3 >

Hand pattern: R R L R R L R L R L R L

**D:**

16th-note sticking pattern: 3 > 3 > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: R L R R L R R L R L R

**E:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > 3 > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: R R L R R L R L R L R L

**F:**

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 > 3 > > 3 > 3

Hand pattern: R R L R R L R L R L R L

Now that we have looked at some triplet exercises that incorporate the snare drum and bass drum, let's look at some exercises that move these triplet patterns around the set. Again, the *hipness* of the groove or fill comes from the voice that you choose. By simply moving one hand to the hi-hat, you can create some nice grooves, and by using the toms you can create some very interesting fills. As I said before, the possibilities are endless. The exercises here are only a few for you to practice.

After the patterns become comfortable, experiment by using other voices of the set such as the cowbell and cymbals. I have found this concept to work very well, and I think you will find the patterns very useful.

## Original Pattern

16th-note sticking pattern: > 3 3 > > 3 3 >

Hand pattern: R R L R R L R L R L R L

R L      R L R L L R L

R L      R L R L L R L

R L > R L R L R L

#### Original Pattern

R L L R R L R L L R R L

R L L R R L R L L R R L

#### Original Pattern

L R L R L R L L R

L L R R L R R L L

These concepts are taken from Rick Latham's book, Contemporary Drumset Techniques. More intensive study of these concepts can be found in this book as well as in his Advanced Funk Studies. For information, contact Rick Latham Publishing, P.O. Box 67306, Los Angeles, California 90067. Also look for Rick's two videos of the same names available from CPP Media/DCL Music Video.



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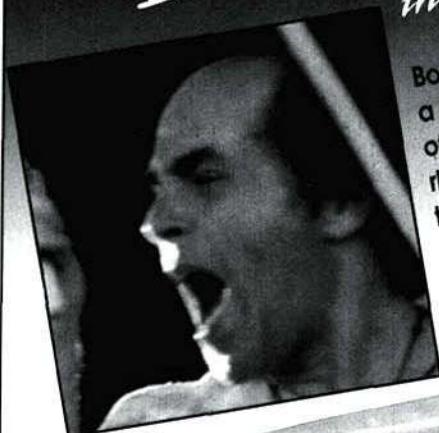
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BOB MOSES

continued from page 29

adept at it, you don't ever have to repeat yourself exactly. You can change it every time but the essence remains the same. You're just embellishing the theme.

**KM:** How does this relate to "Simul-Circular Loopology," which sounds like different melodies within rhythm structures happening simultaneously but that eventually do meet.

**BM:** There are people who have done this before me, but I'm taking the ball and running with it. "Prelude" is the only song like that on *Time Stood Still*. Pure "loopology" would be every musician playing any phrase they want. It could be a slow 4/4 thing that sounds like reggae, it could be three quick bars of 5/4, or just a swirl of abstract sounds. But the deal is you've got to repeat it. All these different repetitions rub against each other and change in relation to each other due to length and frequency. So you're hearing constant repetition and constant change. It's like avant-garde, yet totally grooving. There are ways to modify it to make it closer to conventional music, like agreeing to a key. But people think I'm crazy as it is—if I made an entire album of Simul-Circular Loopology...forget it.

**KM:** What aimed you in this direction?

**BM:** Years ago I used to do "Groove Canon," which is starting different grooves in different places so they overlap each other. That's hinting at it. Also, an album called *Other Not Elsewhere* by Peter Zeldman really turned me around. His drumming made me realize there was so much more possible. He made me feel lazy. He's a one-man looper, I'm doing this with different musicians. He's got each limb looping something different—just amazing. And John Lurie does a similar thing with horns. And rap is a big influence. They're flying in a sample that wasn't meant to be there melodically or rhythmically. They just like the way it sounds. And I don't intellectualize it either.

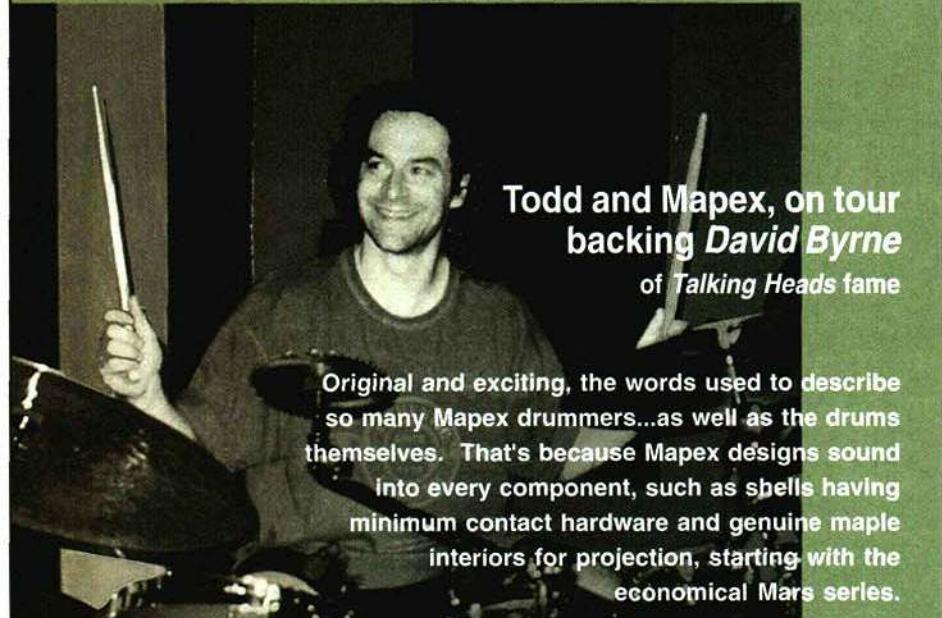
As for rap I like Tribe Called Quest, Jamalski, Pharcyde, Digital Underground, and Nas's *Illmatic*. One of the most sonically interesting dudes is MC Serch from Third Base. His music is like a funk version of Olivier Messiaen. It's always poly-

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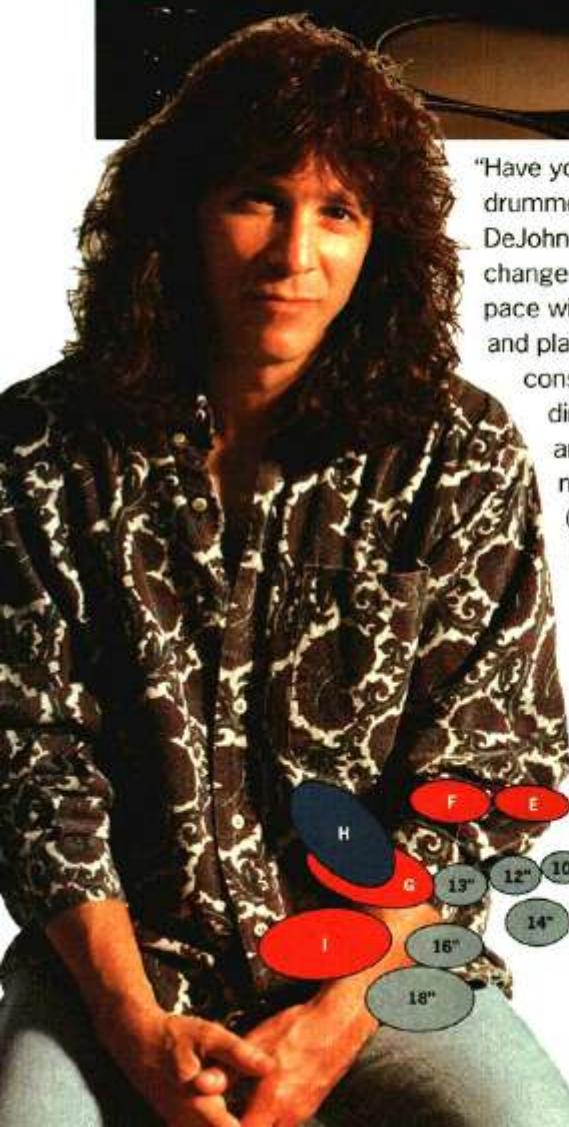
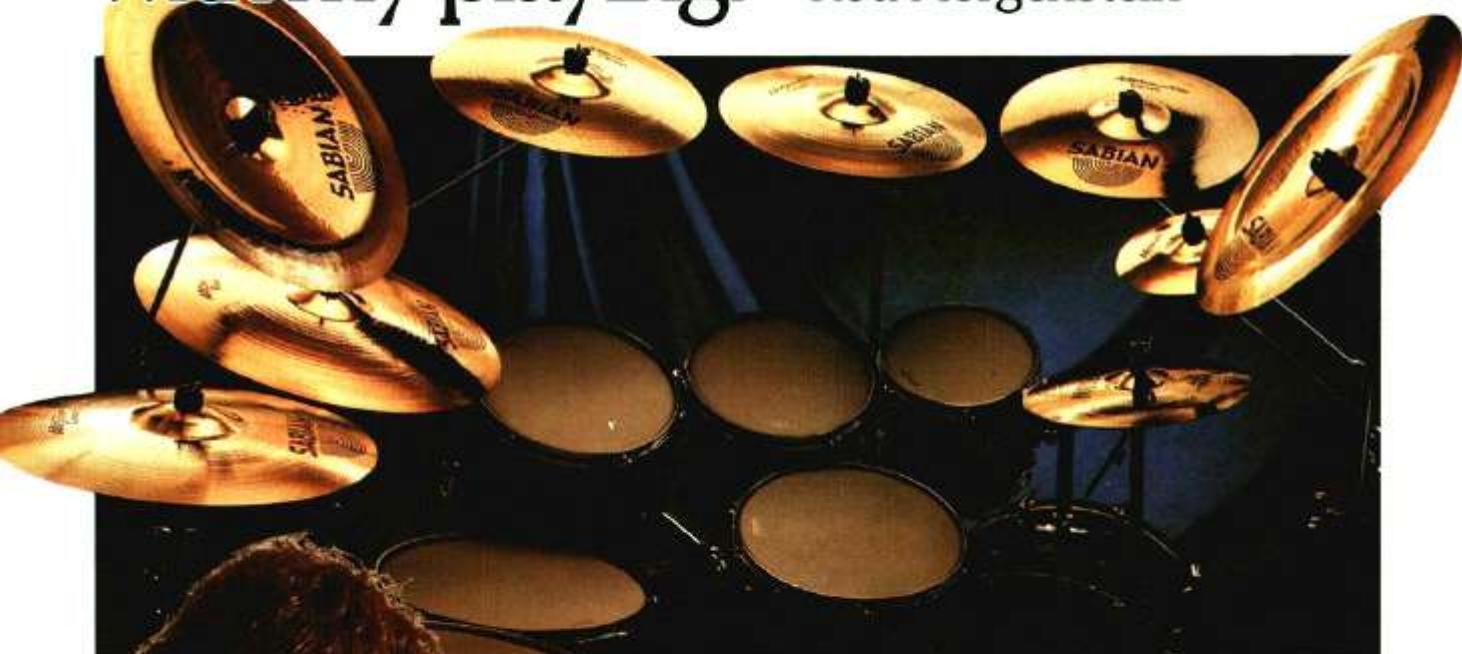
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- Rod Morgenstein

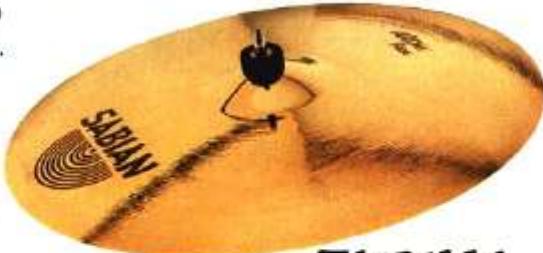


"Have you ever noticed how drummers - everyone from Jack DeJohnette to David Abbruzzese - change their cymbal setups to keep pace with their evolving concepts and playing? I know my playing is

constantly growing in different directions, so my setup grows and changes with me. On the new Dixie Dregs disc, *Full Circle*, I'm playing pretty hard... I need everything to be loud, clear and precise. The 21" AA Dry Ride is amazing. So are the crashes: Medium Thin, Medium and Rock models. And the Splash

and two Chinese make it easy to play different sounding two-hand patterns. But I arrived at this setup through change, by adding and changing cymbals until I found what inspires me most."

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tonal centered, like two key signatures rubbing against each other.

**KM:** What do you teach at New England Conservatory?

**BM:** This approach of playing from the clave. I give students a very friendly bridge to black music—I can explain it. A lot of cats from Africa or the Caribbean who can play it often can't talk about it. I can explain African or reggae in a kid's terms and make it an easy passage.

With most of my students I get them to play *music*, not just the drums. I teach them to find the clave, which I define as

the important or crucial rhythmic hits or resolution points in a given musical phrase. As I mentioned earlier, after playing initially with Latin players, I decided to apply it to all musics I play—be it jazz, funk, Calypso, or reggae.

I teach a three-part process: First, identify the source, whether it's a four-bar modal vamp, a sixteen-bar blues—whatever. Too many drummers take a very random approach. A lot of guys can copy a part, but they can't improvise. They either copy what's been played or there's no relation to the original material at all.

Second is internalization. Sing it, dance it, repeat it until nothing can pull you off of it. When Latin guys play off the clave it's like a clock in their head, in their heart, everywhere. When everyone plays from the same source, you have the option for unity.

Third is variation. You must decide on your source and then embellish. There's always a source, that's how I play. But a lot of jazz guys and beginners don't know about that. Stream of consciousness drumming can be like my asking you about your favorite flavor of ice cream and you say "vanilla" and I say, "Yeah, I think the Bulls will probably beat the Knicks because, really, gardening is my favorite thing to do." The great jazz improvisers could develop a solo off one idea and make it work.

Improvising on a theme lets the dancers keep dancing while you're exploring. It's like having a house with certain beams for structural support. You can take a lot of beams out before the house collapses. It's the same with clave. And it will help your jazz playing, too.

**KM:** Your music has the breeziness of Gil Evans, the punch of Monk, and the freedom and joy of Charles Mingus. No one else seems to be touching on the exuberance of that legacy in jazz.

**BM:** All those people are influences on me as composers, as well as someone else, Hermeto Pascoal. There are no walls or boundaries or ceilings for me, and all music can be mixed, even in the same tune. You can mix things that were never meant to be mixed, like a reggae beat with Arabic singing. There are no rules or laws. Hermeto exemplifies that. I tell students they can take a very loose, organic, free, Jack DeJohnette approach and apply it to a reggae groove. Why not?

I'm into a continuum. That's all that was, all that is, and all that will be, and it's here now. It's a spiritual thing. The spirit world is like that. Melodies and rhythms often come to me through, let's call it, "the psychic-spirit jet stream."

**KM:** You must have done the necessary study. Music of this level doesn't just walk up and hit you over the head.

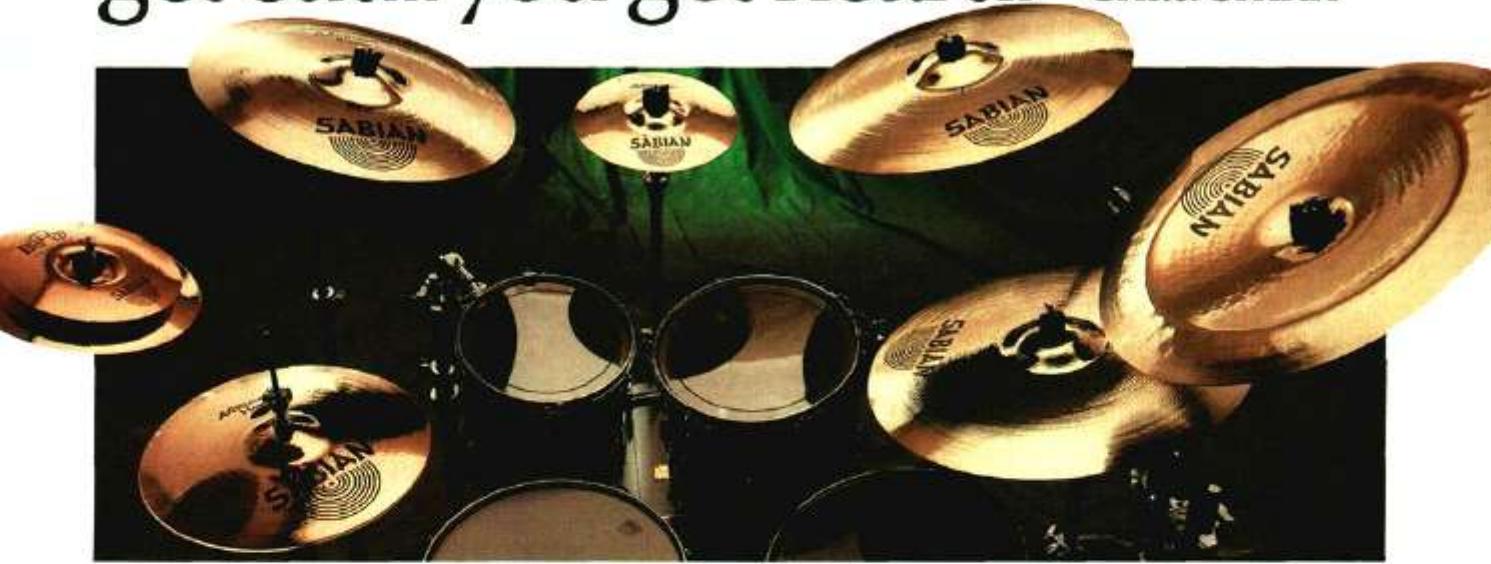
**BM:** Let's just say I'm very committed to refining my music. In terms of book study, I didn't do a lot. I listened to a lot of music. I recommend *Djabote* by an incred-

The advertisement features a central photograph of Frank Beard, the drummer of ZZ Top, wearing sunglasses and a patterned shirt, sitting behind a drum set and playing a TAMA Iron Cobra pedal. The background is dark with red and orange highlights. Several text snippets are overlaid on the image:

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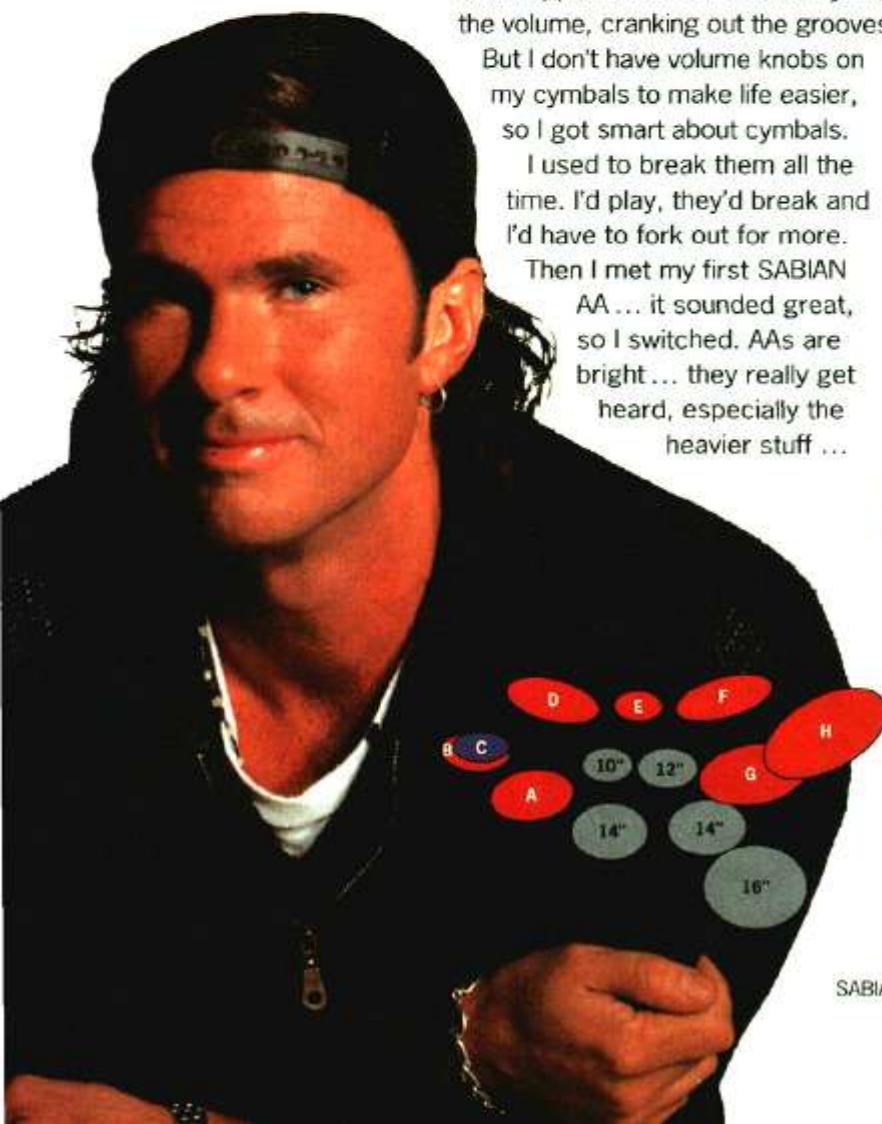
But I don't have volume knobs on my cymbals to make life easier, so I got smart about cymbals.

I used to break them all the time. I'd play, they'd break and I'd have to fork out for more.

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ible African drummer, Doudou Ndiaye Rose. It's on Peter Gabriel's Real World label—it's not hard to find.

The first time I heard African music it didn't sound exotic to me. It sounded exactly like what I'd been singing to myself in my head. Till that point I thought I was some isolated freak at fourteen. I originally heard the music on a tape given to my father by a respected Hispanic actor, Hector Elizondo. On some level that guy is a shaman, a very holy cat. The tape was the music of Burundi and Gabon. That music grooves but not in any one time sig-

nature. The rhythm resolves to a tonic tone, bouncing off the tonic, different bounces taking different lengths of time. When I heard this tape, I felt like I was home. I was on the inside. I feel very empathetic on a spiritual level with a variety of pan-African musics. They resonate to the way I hear music.

**KM:** You've had versions of your band Mozamba that were heavily dance-oriented.

**BM:** Yes, and I'd use all the Elvin and Roy Haynes stuff and people would be dancing like crazy, even the beer bottles

were dancing. [laughs] There were hardly any solos then, but the band changed. I feel dance music is a high art, but it doesn't get treated that way. People treat you more like servants. The new Mozamba is more like jazz again. There are more doors open, ironically. It lets me do hip hop beats and kalimba or log drum beats.

**KM:** Was Gary Burton your breakthrough gig?

**BM:** Before that I played with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and before that I played with the Free Spirits, which was the first jazz-rock group I know of. That band had Larry Coryell and Jim Pepper. We were playing Coltrane and Albert Ayler lines over Chuck Berry grooves. This is four years before *Bitches Brew* and a couple years before Blood, Sweat & Tears. We were doing a real jazz vibe in rock clubs. We were the house band at Steve Paul's The Scene. I'd go in the men's room, and Allen Ginsberg would be teaching Tiny Tim how to sing "Hare Krishna" with finger cymbals. That was hilarious. Work with Metheny, Burton, and Gil Evans followed.

**KM:** What are your thoughts on your playing?

**BM:** I never focused on technique—I was lazy with practice. I'm not a drum fanatic, I'm a music fanatic. I love drums but it's just a part of music to me. This music from Burundi doesn't even have any drums.

Lately I've gotten unhappy with this hierarchy of the limbs, which is true with most drummers. If you're right-handed your right hand is your strongest limb, your left hand the next strongest, right foot next, and left foot is the weak sister. That's accentuated when your right hand is constantly riding the cymbal or hi-hat while the left hand is occasionally accenting. So the right hand is getting stronger and stronger. The other limbs don't get to ride. For an alternative I came up with what I call the full body ride. I want to be able to ride simultaneously with all my limbs.

**KM:** Do the small hats help you get closer to that idea?

**BM:** They speak quicker. I'm thinking of going to smaller drums, too.

**KM:** Where do you get the energy to keep exploring?

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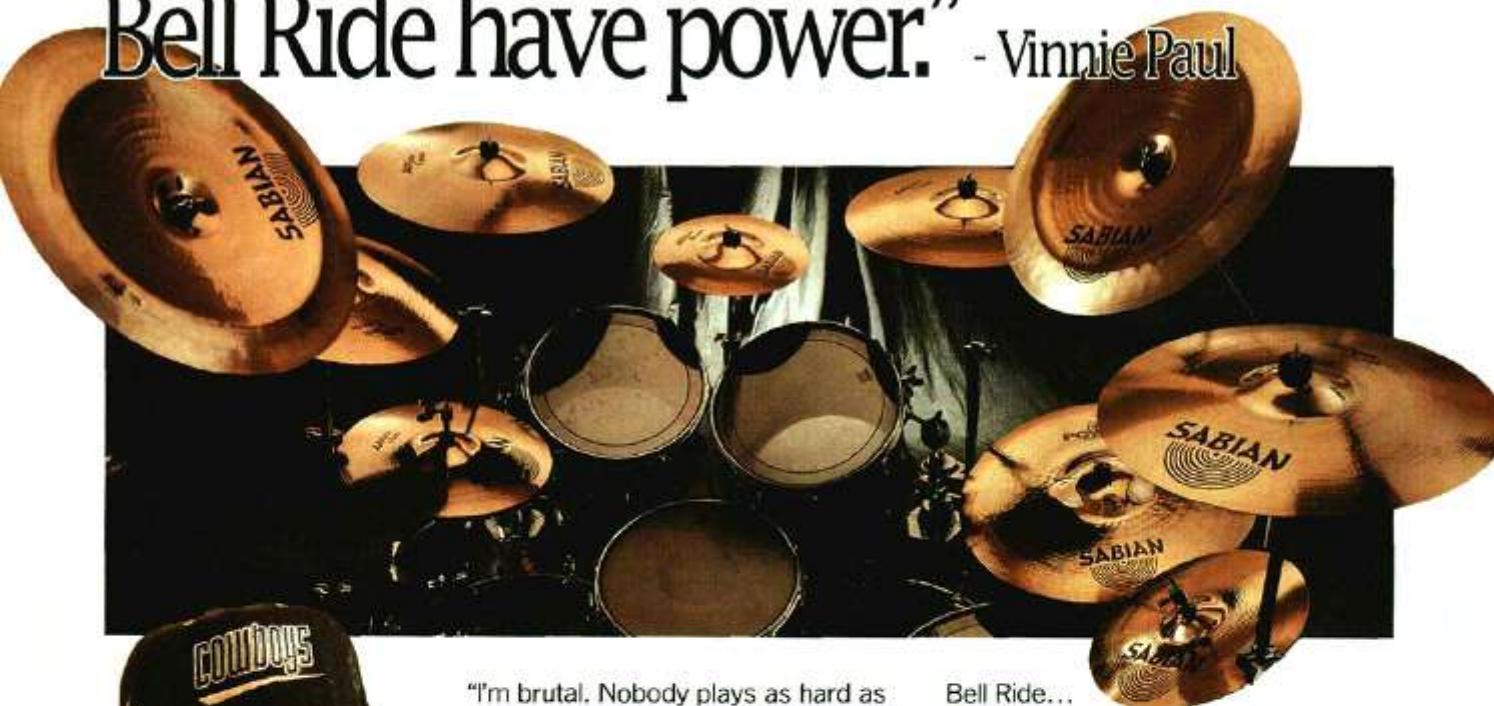
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Bell Ride... the bell on this cymbal is the ultimate. Without a doubt, these are the coolest cymbals... they never let me down." For more info on SABIAN cymbals and the setups of leading drummers, see your SABIAN dealer or contact us directly for your free copy of this year's SABIAN NewsBeat Catalog.



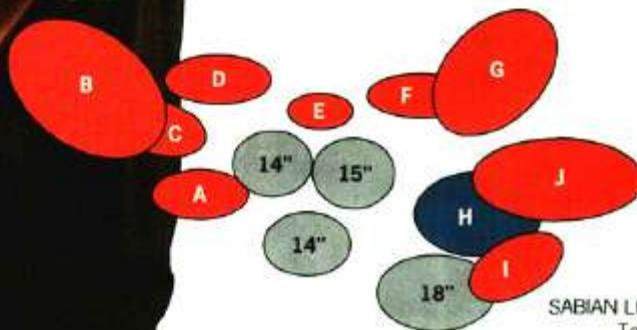
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**BM:** I think creativity is one of the most healing activities one can do. In my case I stoke it. Even if you're feeling great grief or pain, it's much better to write a song or poem or symphony about it than to go out and kill somebody or punch somebody out. Even the anger in grunge music is a release of tension and frustration. If you really love somebody you can write a song about that. You can use nature to travel. I'm stuck living in the northeast, but in my heart of hearts I'm a tropical person. So I write my music and it takes me to the tropics.

I'm into changing and growing and re-evaluating. If you want to grow and get better you can't be afraid to sound bad, look bad, or look foolish. If you're afraid to lose face, you won't go forward. In a sense what everybody should do is work on their weakest thing. It's very important to dive headfirst into what you *can't* do.

I've been working on a system of developing this equality of limbs. This system calls on me to do solos with just my left foot. My fantasy is to do a solo concert with just my left foot! My foot is lame, it's

embarrassing.

I don't use the term, but some people call me a "master drummer," and I have been playing drums for thirty-five years. To go back and sound like a beginner could be an ego problem for some people, but I love it. I won't subject it to an audience on a gig, yet. But when I practice I'm always playing lead with my left hand—practicing what I can't play. With learning, every time you do something bad it's like money in the bank. You might do it bad a hundred times before that hundred-and-first time sounds good. But there's no way to skip it. You have to pay to sound good.

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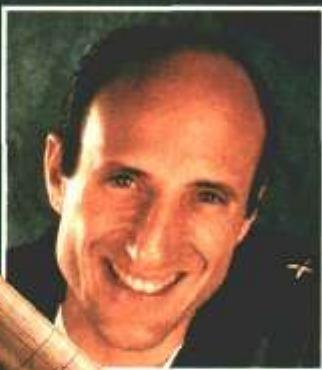
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# Ostinato Studies

by Joe Morello

Transcribed by Marvin Burock



MUSIC KEY



The following exercises involve playing an ostinato (or repetitive rhythm) with one hand while improvising with the other. Over the years I've used many ostinato patterns in my drum solos. Improvising against an ostinato is an excellent way to develop good coordination.

The first exercise is based on exercise 11 from the "Ostinato Studies" section of my book *Master Studies* and page 39 of Ted Reed's *Syncopation*. The idea here is to play the ostinato on the snare drum with the left hand while playing the line from Ted Reed's book on any tom-tom with the right hand.

The second example is similar to the first exercise. However, it's based on exercise 5 from the "Ostinato Studies" section of my book and page 40 of Reed's book.

Once you've mastered the first two exercises, try the following examples for more of a challenge. While playing the ostinatos from examples 1 and 2, try playing the line from Ted Reed's book on the snare drum and bass drum; play all of the short notes (8th notes) on the snare drum and all of the long notes (quarter notes and dotted quarter notes) on the bass drum.

With practice, you'll eventually have total freedom and be able to play anything against the ostinato. Good luck and have fun!



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# A Look At The Brite Works

by Rick Van Horn

Over the years *MD* has received a number of inquiries as to the feasibility of having one's cymbals restored to like-new condition or given a "brilliant" finish by the manufacturer. The major cymbal companies have always responded by saying that while they would like to accommodate their customers, it's really not practical to retro-finish individual, privately owned cymbals. Their production processes simply don't lend themselves to such a service.

Enter Jim Brodie—owner and operator of the Brite Works, in Billings, Montana. Jim's entire business is dedicated to the custom-cleaning and polishing of cymbals. He has spent years developing the machinery and methods that allow him to give cymbals an exceptional appearance without affecting their acoustic properties.

Jim came to the cymbal-polishing business as a result of combining two careers: one as a custom metal polisher for show cars, the other as a musician. "I played the drums myself in my childhood and teen years," says Jim, "before switching to bass. A friend of mine who's a blues band drummer was one of these guys who didn't believe in cleaning his cymbals. He thought it took away from the tone qualities of the cymbals. So his were really dirty—I mean they were *green*. I thought the look of them on stage detracted from the whole visual appearance of the band. I got to thinking about it and wondering if I could apply a high-shine finish to them. I had been away from drumming for years, so I wasn't aware that most of the cymbal companies had factory "brilliant" finishes."

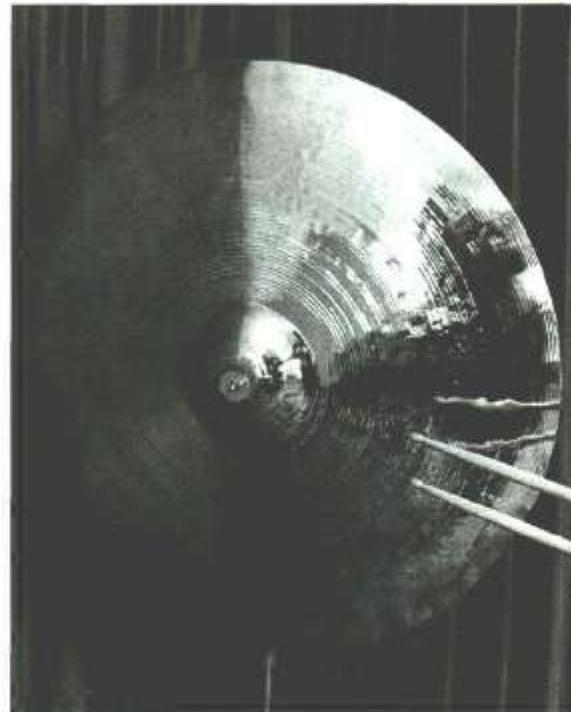
"I started working on the process," Jim continues, "and it took me about three and a half years to get to the point where I could get the look I wanted and still retain the acoustic and physical characteristics of whatever type of cymbal I was working on.

I didn't practice on any customers' cymbals, of course; I realized the prize that they are to their owners. I practiced on pawn-shop cymbals and whatever others I could get my hands on that didn't belong to anybody. And I did ruin a few cymbals before I got to the final process. I started offering my service to drummers in 1986."

Jim's service varies, depending on what the drummer desires. Some want only a cleaning; others want one of the two custom finishes that Jim offers. Once that decision is made, what is the process that Jim employs?

"It depends on how dirty the cymbal starts out," Jim replies. "Some of the ones I get really are green—especially those that come from coastal areas where they get played in club environments with salt air, smoke, and other densities that settle on the cymbals. I strip those cymbals with a cleaner that I have that doesn't affect them in any way except to remove the built-up residues on them. After the cymbals have been cleaned I go into the machining process that creates one of the two finishes I provide. One is the Lustre finish, which is very similar to a factory "brilliant." It's very consistent from the center of the bell to the outer edges of the cymbal, and it's done without removing any of the tonal grooves. Then there is my Mirror finish, which is self-explanatory. I've had drummers tell me that they can literally comb their hair in their reflection in the cymbal."

Jim stresses that the techniques he employs to finish cymbals are different from those used by the factories for their



This "two-toned" cymbal demonstrates the difference between the surface of an uncleared cymbal and one given a Mirror finish at the Brite Works.

"brilliant" series. "The finish is consistent from one cymbal to the next," he says, "because what I do is not a mass-production situation. Every cymbal is unique unto itself and is treated as such. I play each cymbal in order to get an ear for its particular sound characteristics before I start. Sometimes I play it all the way through the process to be sure that I wind up with all the same characteristics. I'm very careful about not losing them. Usually the comments I get from drummers are that if anything the cymbals sound 'sweeter' or 'brighter,' or that the crashes sound 'fuller' than they were before. Of course I realize that the brightness and brilliance of the finish can sometimes enhance the 'hearing with the eyes' effect, too. But some drummers who are very knowledgeable have commented that the treated cymbals had a

much prettier, more musical sound to them."

Of course you can't please everybody, and Jim did have one customer who was dissatisfied with the result of his service. However, this was more a result of misunderstanding the service than of any flaw in Jim's process. "I did a set of four cymbals for a drummer back east one time," Jim recalls. "They were *very* dirty. All I did was clean them and put a light buffing on them to bring back the original look that they had when they were new. I sent them back to the drummer, and he was upset with me. He's the only guy in all the time I've been cleaning cymbals who said that I had changed the tone and pitch characteristics of the cymbals. In fact, he said that they didn't sound *anything* like they did when he sent them to me. What he didn't realize—like a lot of drummers don't—was that the sounds of cymbals change over time as dirt and film build up. Drummers don't hear it because it happens so gradually. They become accustomed to the 'altered' sound—which isn't the 'true'

sound that the cymbal was designed to produce. Cleaning the cymbal removes all the caked-in residue that has built up in the tone grooves and instantly opens the sound of the cymbal back to what it originally was when it came from the factory. Drummers should be aware of this before making the choice to have their cymbals cleaned and polished."

Understandably, Jim is reluctant to go into specific detail regarding his processes and equipment. However, he will say that all of his machinery has been specially built or adapted for the sole purpose of cleaning and polishing cymbals. "I've recently done some serious upgrading on my machinery," he says, proudly. "But it's the technique I use, more than anything else, that is different from what anybody else does. Years back I talked to the people at Zildjian. They told me that there had literally been dozens of people and companies who had tried to perfect methods of doing what I'm doing—but none of them had ever succeeded. They'd gotten the cymbals too hot or removed too much metal or whatever.

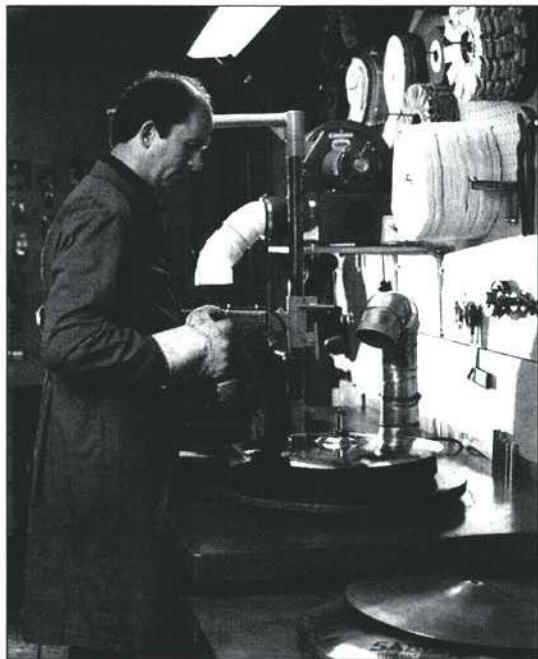
They'd either destroyed the cymbals or greatly taken away from their individual characteristics. So as far as I

know I'm the only one who has ever succeeded at doing the finishes I do without changing the characteristics of the cymbals."

How are Jim's custom finishes different from the "brilliant" finishes applied by the major cymbal manufacturers? "I think my finishes are more consistent than factory-buffed cymbals," he replies, "because I can afford to employ one thing that they can't—time. But I want to stress that that's not a negative reflection on what they do; you have to understand that they're putting out hundreds of cymbals a day. I work with an individual drummer's cymbals, practically on a one-on-one basis. So it's more of a craftsman-type situation."

And what does this craftsman charge for his services? "I charge \$6 per cymbal just to clean them," says Jim. "My Lustre finish—which is equivalent to a factory "brilliant"—is \$25 per cymbal. My Mirror finish is \$40 per cymbal. Return shipping is on top of that, and that varies depending on how many cymbals are being shipped and to where. I usually utilize UPS for my shipping.

"I really struggled with my pricing," Jim continues, "because I wanted to make my service available to as many drummers as



**Jim Brodie employs two different turntables on this polishing unit. Each turntable is powered independently, with its speed electronically controlled over a wide range. Different speeds are required for various stages of refinishing, depending on the finish desired and the type and brand of cymbal being finished. While some buffing operations employ mechanical support (as in the photo at right), the final finishing step for the Mirror finish is always done by hand (as in the photo at left) in order to ensure accuracy and a flawless finish. Specific buffing head/compound combinations have been developed over the past six years for each polishing operation.**



possible. I realize that a lot of people are working nine-to-five jobs during the week and gigging on weekends. Those drummers can't afford a lot of money. I'm able to keep my prices down somewhat because there's no 'middle man' involved in my operation; there are no research people or administrative costs. On the other hand, I thought that \$40 was a fair price for the Mirror finish because there's a *lot* of time involved in it.

When faced with the obvious question of why it would cost the same to have a 6" splash cymbal finished as it would for a 22" ride, Jim explains: "Size alone is not a determining factor in how much work I put in on a given cymbal, so it really isn't a factor in my pricing. Each type of cymbal offers its own challenge. True, a 6" splash is small, so there isn't as much area to clean and polish. But a splash is also very thin and delicate, with sound characteristics that

are very vulnerable. In order to retain those characteristics, I have to take as much time with a splash as I do with a much larger ride cymbal."

"The response I've gotten from a lot of drummers," Jim continues, "is that when they first sent in their cymbals they thought my prices were high for a polishing service. But they weren't really aware of what they were going to be getting back. Once they saw the finished cymbals they thought the service was more than worth the price."

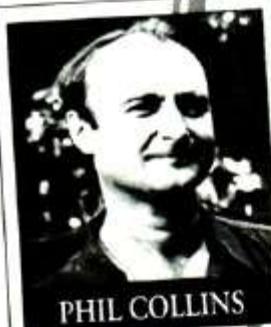
Jim offers one word of caution to drummers considering his service: "I can't put a Lustre or Mirror finish on a cymbal without removing the silk-screen-imprinted logo. Those imprints are applied at the factory after the cymbal has received its final buffing. There's no way I can work around them, and I'm not authorized by the manufacturers to re-apply those logos. However, I understand that some manufacturers can re-apply the imprints. I suggest that drummers call the appropriate manufacturer to see if this can be done *before* they send their cymbals to me, if the imprinted logo is important to them. On the other hand, the trademark and logo that's stamped into the metal itself is *not* removed during my process. I take specific care to work around that so that the product identification is still there."

Even if they were confident about the results of Jim's finishing process, drummers would naturally be concerned about how long they would be without their cymbals in order to have the service performed. Jim responds, "I get them finished and out of here within four to five days, maximum. Of course, shipping time back and forth depends on the location of the drummer. Most drummers tend to choose UPS second-day air—at least for the return trip." Jim adds that the time factor is not really affected by the number of cymbals a customer sends. "If a drummer has a really large collection of cymbals," he says, "I'll just stay up later!"

Another concern that a drummer might have is how long the custom finish on his or her cymbals can be expected to last. According to Jim, "The Mirror finish will stay indefinitely; it's a matter of when the drummer decides to clean them. The metal

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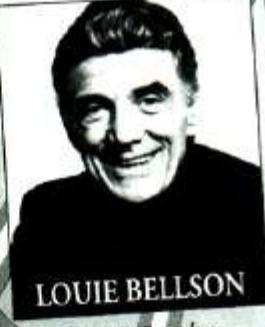
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will still tend to tarnish. But because you don't have the "peaky-ness" in the surface, you don't have the retention of smoke and grime that you do with more heavily grooved cymbals. There's no place for that stuff to adhere to the cymbal, so it becomes much easier to keep clean. The Lustre finish is not quite as good, because you still have some of the grooves and pores on the cymbal—but it's still much easier to keep clean than an unpolished cymbal. I have a sheet that I return with the cymbals with instructions for their care."

Those instructions include the fact that Jim offers his own brand of cymbal cleaner and polish—strictly to his customers directly, rather than via retail sale. He also suggests commercially available cleaners and polishes. "There are quite a number of cleaners and polishes available," he says, "but many of them have abrasive mediums in them for cleaning purposes. That's not desirable on factory "brilliants" or on the Lustre or Mirror finishes that I do, because it will scratch the surface of the cymbal. Drummers will want to use something with a cream base that's not abrasive."

One aspect of Jim's finishing process may be improved durability for the cymbal as a whole. Several hard-hitting drummers—who had a history of cracking cymbals—have reported to Jim that after having his Mirror finish applied to their cymbals the cracking problem was greatly reduced.

While he certainly doesn't make any claims along this line, Jim does have a theory about how his process might improve cymbal durability. "I've done a bit of research into metal stresses," he says, "and I think what's happening is that the Mirror finish takes away any 'stress risers' that might be in the metal as a result of the lathing process at the factory. I'm talking about the high peaks and tooling marks in the cymbal. With any metal—and especially where different metals are melted down into alloys and then batched and poured—you can wind up with inconsistencies as the different metals solidify. These, in turn, can create areas on the surface of the metal where there will be a tightness that can crack. During the process that creates the Mirror finish—and even with factory "brilliant" finishes to some degree—these stress points are eliminated or greatly reduced."

Billings, Montana is not exactly a hub of the music industry, so naturally the Brite Works does virtually all of its business via shipping companies and the mail. And while drummers might be understandably wary about shipping their beloved cymbals off to the wilds of the Big Sky Country, Jim must also be wary of the "check is in the mail" syndrome. "I hate to say it," he comments sadly, "but in the past I did get stiffed a couple of times. One guy bounced a check on me, and another—for whom I did a job of seventeen cymbals—never

even bothered to send me a check. I decided after that that from there on I'd only accept certified checks, postal money orders, or some other form of guaranteed money. But I think that may have chased away some customers, because it's a hassle to get those things. So while they're still an option, I am now set up to accept credit card charges. Although I will start the work before the charges clear, I do require payment before I will return the finished cymbals. But I make that clear to customers when I first speak to them on the phone, so there's no misunderstanding."

Drummers desiring more information on the unique service offered by Jim Brodie can contact him at the Brite Works, 421 Lewis Avenue, Billings, MT 59102, (406) 256-7901. Jim does have one request: If you get his message machine, please leave your mailing address, not just your phone number. "In the past," says Jim, "long-distance calls—versus the amount of business they generated—almost put me out of business, so I just can't return phone inquiries. But I do have some nice brochures outlining my services and charges that I'll be happy to mail to anyone who's interested."

*Photos by Clark Martin/CM Photography*



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## Sieve Jordan On...

by Ken Micallef

Steve Jordan's Fifth Avenue loft has all the accoutrements befitting an international rock star. There's an in-home studio, a 1963 Ludwig black pearl drumset (*a la Ringo Starr*), art deco furniture in the living room, and, most astonishingly, the 8x12 tom-tom used by the legendary Al Jackson to record his trademark sound with Al Green.

Influenced by Jackson, Tony Williams, Clyde Stubblefield, Art Blakey, Ringo Starr, and others, Steve Jordan's career began in the '70s—first as a fusion drummer (Brecker Brothers, John Scofield, Michael Urbaniak, Mark Colby, David Spinoza, Steve Khan's *Eyewitness*), then as a member of the Blues Brothers Band. Jordan's invigorating funk drumming on the early David Letterman show was appreciated by thousands of drummers; they tuned in nightly to hear what variation he would put on the evening's theme song. His departure (due to dissatisfaction with the show's sound quality and the band's repertoire) led to more studio work (Mike Stem, Donald Fagen, David Sanborn, Don Grolnick) and his current co-writing/performing spot with Keith Richards' Xpensive Winos.

Jordan is currently working on the soundtrack for the next John Singleton film as well as producing other artists. An upcoming Buddy Rich tribute record produced by Neil Peart will feature Jordan in small-group settings.

### ...Aaron Comess

Spin Doctors: "Two Princes" (from *Pocket Full Of Kryptonite*)

Comess: drums, percussion; Mark White: bass; Eric Schenkman: guitars; Christopher Barron: vocals

[After the track finishes, Jordan quickly attempts to move to the next selection.]

KM: You didn't care for that?

SJ: I didn't say that. It sounds good. It's interesting to hear certain tunings.

KM: Do you think it's funky?

SJ: [pauses] They're going for the funk; they're trying. [laughs] I like the fact that they're going for it. They are more funky than your average alternative band. They have tunes and charisma happening. I understand why they're successful. They're not nearly as funky as the Average White Band were, though. I think Nirvana was more funky, frankly. They had a couple of grooves that were intense. But the Spin Doctors are going in the right direction.



Photo by Eber Roberti

### ...Mike Diamond

Beastie Boys: "POW" (from *Check Your Head*)

Diamond: drums; MCA: bass; Adrock: guitar; Mark Ramos Nishita: D6, clavinet, organ

SJ: Who's this, the Beastie Boys? I'm happy that they're playing stuff and doing their thing. This is good. I'm glad that people are learning how to play. It's a different way to approach it—become famous and *then* learn how to play—but I like the fact that they know that's important. I like the Beastie Boys' records because of what they used to lift. On *Paul's Boutique* they lifted everything from "Drop It In The Slot" by Tower Of Power to the Beatles' *White Album*. From Garibaldi to Ringo Starr: I like that. They were very clever. Now the only thing left for them to do is to learn how to play, so they're doing it. That's a real triumph; now they can see how hard it is to play. And I like Mike D. I definitely applaud them.

### ...Roger Hawkins

Wilson Pickett: "Sit Down And Talk This Over" (from *Hey Jude*)

Hawkins: drums; David Hood: bass; Albert Lowe and Duane Allman: guitars; Barry Beckett: piano; Marvell Thomas: organ; Gene Miller and Jack Peck: trumpets; Aaron Varnell and Joe Arnold: tenor sax; James Mitchell: baritone sax

SJ: This is Wilson Pickett off of *Hey Jude*. It was made down in Muscle Shoals, and it sounds like Roger Hawkins, with David Hood and Barry Beckett. Prime Hawkins is on the Isley Brothers' "I'll Take You There." If you play half as good as that one time in your life you're cool. That's all you can say about that. That's a definitive statement; that'll last. "I'll Take You There." BOOM. Roger Hawkins is great. He's a perfect example of a fatback drummer. He was always on the back of the beat; that's the definition of fatback. He knew how to broaden the beat; that's why the cross-sticking in "I'll Take You There" is so big. Up until that time cross-sticking was a little clave, click-click thing. The closest thing was in Jamaica, where cross-sticking was the backbeat in combination with the bass drum. But on "I'll Take You There" it was all cross-stick. WHAP!

### ...Dennis Chambers

Haakon Graf Band: "Tickle Me" (from *Grafitti*)

Chambers: drums; Graf: keyboards; Gary Grainger: bass; Ulf Wakenius: guitar

SJ: What is this—some bad outtake from a Corea Elektric Band record?

KM: What do you think of the groove?

SJ: There is no groove. [pauses] This is like Chinese water torture. Who is this?

KM: Dennis Chambers with Haakon Graf's Band.

SJ: Now, I love Dennis, but that's the weirdest thing I've ever heard him play. I heard Dennis play when he was with Parliament Funkadelic and he was *kicking*. I don't get this. What the heck is it? That's just the wrong track.

Sometimes you do a session and you have to do stuff you don't

want to do. You play shit that becomes a technical exercise. It has nothing to do with grooving; it's all technical. Everyone feels obligated to do that sort of playing at one time or another so that people will get off their back. Then they can play the way they want to play.

**KM:** What was your equivalent gig?

**SJ:** The Brecker Brothers or earlier stuff—though I liked The Breckers' music. I always made sure to implement some groove in this horribly overwrought music. There was no reason for it to be that complex. It was more confusion, which is what I called it: "con-fusion music." I tried to make it groove, because that's what affects people.

### ...Chad Smith

Red Hot Chili Peppers: "If You Have To Ask" (from *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*)

Smith: drums; Anthony Keidis: vocals; Flea: bass; John Frusciante: guitar

**SJ:** Who's that?

**KM:** Red Hot Chili Peppers.

**SJ:** That ain't happening. I like the Red Hot Chili Peppers, too. What happened on that track? That's the worst track on the album; "Give It Away" is a million times better than that. That's the weakest track; it's light-weight.

**KM:** You didn't think it was grooving?

**SJ:** No. The guitar was grooving in the intro. The drums were light. The funk is light.

**KM:** What makes it light?

**SJ:** [Jordan sighs, then gets up and walks to his drumkit.] The cat is playing like... [He plays the same pattern in a half-hearted fashion.] He had the right idea, but you want to play some funk. [He plays the pattern again in a funky, skanky fashion, loosely shuffling his left hand on the snare drum while slamming 2 and 4.] Now that's funky. Listen to that against the track. But as it is the track is light. And I hate the way those hi-hat cymbals sound.

### ...Al Jackson

Al Green: "I'm Still In Love With You" (from *Al Green's Greatest Hits Vol. I*)

Jackson: drums; other personnel not listed

**SJ:** That's the drummer right there! You hear that?! AAHH! You know, he co-wrote this song with Al Green. You have to understand how all this fits together—how the drum goes to the bass. The bass is straight; you wouldn't think it would work if you heard it independently of the music. There's a gallop to the drumming; many things are happening. Listen to the band. [Steve cranks the stereo.]

Al Jackson was a total musician. He was a writer, a player—he shaped sounds. He was a genius. You recognized his drumming on a record even before you knew whose record it was. When you're that brilliant you stand apart. There are a lot of ingredients involved, I don't say I know them all. You'd have to know about his life and childhood. He invented pockets that had never been played before. He invented a style. He got inside the beat—inside

the quarter notes—and came up with different stuff. That's why there are so many elements to his playing. These Al Green songs are the sexiest, most loved, most grooving, want-to-get-down songs you ever heard. And everything Al Jackson played with Otis Redding or with Sam & Dave was truly innovative.

### .. Joey Baron

Baron Down: Guzzle (from *Tongue In Groove*)

Baron: drums; Ellery Eskelin: tenor sax; Steve Swell: trombone

**SJ:** I like that, it was cool—like Dewey Redman meets the Borneo Horns meets Sun Ra. Who was that?

**KM:** Joey Baron.

**SJ:** I don't know him. That was good. I liked it.

**KM:** Why did you like this and not the Chili Peppers' track?

**SJ:** Baron is all the way in the groove; the Chili Peppers' guy was light. You can hear when somebody is in it as opposed to skimming it. The Baron track was more organic. You've got to start from the bottom up. That sounded like it had some earth in it. I liked his sound a lot. I really dig it. I can hear all the influences—and they're all good influences. It's happening.



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# Miking Your Drums For Live Sound

by Mark Parsons

It's Saturday night, and your drums are really happening. You've been working on your chops and your kit is sounding cool—good heads, well-tuned, etc. Then you stop and wonder: Is this great sound getting to your live audience intact? Perhaps it's time to consider miking your drums.

## Why?

Most of the reasons to mike your drums fall under the general categories of *volume* or *tone*. One obvious volume scenario is playing a venue that's simply too large to cover with an unmiked kit. Another is playing outdoors (where you're lucky if your sound even makes it to the front of the stage unaided).

There are also times when you might want to mike your drums in smaller rooms, even if you're playing at moderate volume levels. Let's face it: With certain types of popular music, the audience expects to hear that big "produced" drum sound that's so integral to these styles. (Dance music and metal are two divergent genres that come to mind.) But even if you want a fairly natural sound, you should consider miking your kit. By reinforcing your drums you can both increase the quality of the sound to the house *and* improve the sonic environment on stage. You'll be able to get the tone and volume level you want out front without playing as hard, making life easier for your fellow bandmembers.

## General Considerations

A few things worth looking at are: 1) your existing equipment (mixer/mic's/speakers), 2) your budget for new equipment (if any), and 3) technical support. (Are you running your own sound, or do

you have the luxury of a sound technician?) These factors will help determine what type of miking arrangement you use, but there's a workable solution for almost every situation.

One of the most common types of microphones used on drums is your basic cardioid dynamic vocal mic' (Shure 57 and 58, EV N-DYM, etc.). The good news here is that they're relatively inexpensive and plentiful (your band just might have a few extra somewhere), they sound good (especially on snares and toms), and they're pretty much bulletproof. (A few years ago, while I was doing a set at a popular showcase club in L.A., the house soundman put an ancient SM-58 on my snare. That mic' had gone through four bands a night for years and had been hit by so many sticks that the metal windscreens were crushed like a stepped-on ping-pong ball. I was going to complain, but I listened to it first and it still sounded great!)

There are also large-diaphragm dynamic mic's designed more specifically for percussion applications, such as the AKG D-112, Sennheiser 421, Beyer M-88, Electro-Voice RE-20, and others. If available, these will generally produce a superior sound on kicks and toms. A third type of mic' often used on drums is the condenser. Primarily used over the kit to pick up the cymbals, condensers excel at reproducing high frequencies but usually require phantom power (though if your board doesn't have this feature, you can buy stand-alone phantom power units fairly reasonably).

We'll get into specifics regarding these various types of mic's in a minute, but first there are a couple of other systems you should be aware of. One is the miniature "clamp-on" type of microphone, available from AKG, Shure, and others (including the K&K system, reviewed in *MD*'s April '94 *Electronic Review*). These save you the hassle of carrying extra mic' stands around—although you'll still need a boom

or two if you want to run overhead mic's. There is also the internal method of miking drums, as exemplified by the May system. These are special versions of many of the popular drum mic's noted previously, modified to mount inside the drum shell. This system provides high-quality sound and fantastic isolation, but is neither inexpensive nor flexible. You absolutely need a separate mic' for each drum (along with whatever cymbal mic's you need), and once you've mounted a mic' in a particular shell you're probably not going to be inclined to move it if you vary your setup occasionally.

Both the clamp-on and the internal miking options should be checked out. They may be just what the doctor ordered for your particular situation.

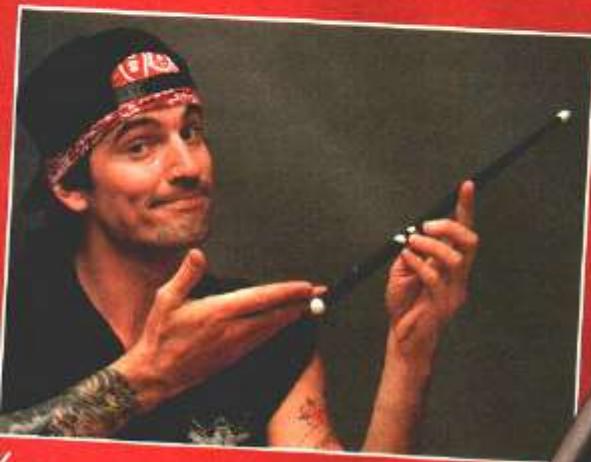
## Specific Applications

If you ask four pro sound technicians what their favorite kick drum mic' is, you'll probably get four answers—which goes to prove that it's partly a matter of opinion. But you'll notice a general consensus as to the basic *type* of microphone recommended for each application. What follows is a combination of my own preferences—both as an engineer and as the smiling face sitting behind the drumkit—and the experience of numerous sound techs whose brains I've picked unmercifully over the years.

**Kick Drum.** The mic' of choice here is a rugged dynamic mic' with a large diaphragm (to adequately reproduce the low frequencies) and that is rated for high SPLs (for the obvious reason that things tend to get a bit loud inside a kick drum!). My personal favorite for the type of sound I like from a kick—which may be different from yours—is an AKG D-112. Other highly regarded mic's for this application include the EV RE-20, the Beyer M-88, and the Sennheiser 421. All of these mic's will perform admirably, as will others with similar design criteria. In a pinch you can use a

# If a better way to play comes along, what are you gonna do, ignore it?

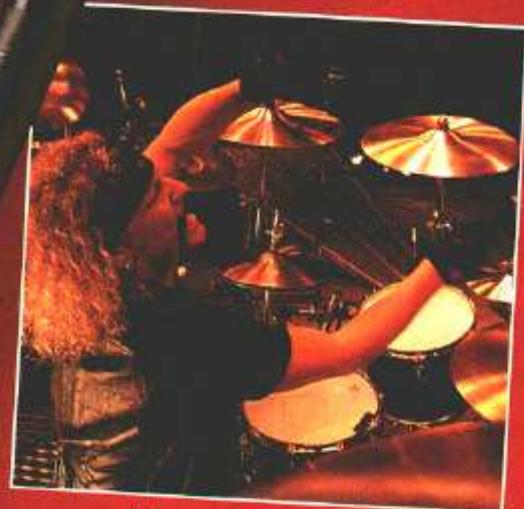
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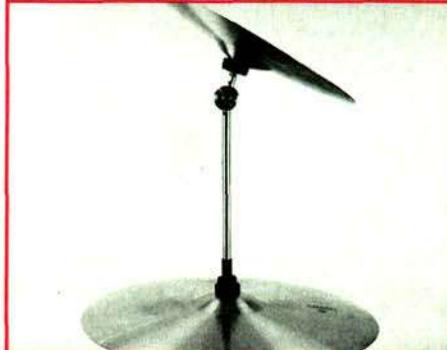
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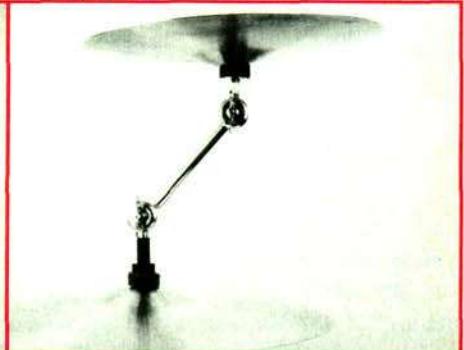
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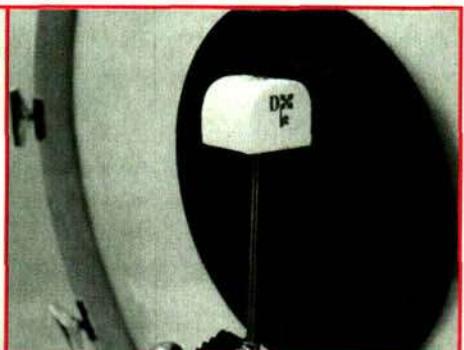
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Placing the mic' on a desk stand in front of the kick won't cut it, unless you're playing big band. Use a boom or gooseneck to get the mic' well *inside* the drum, pointing at the beater contact spot. This will increase isolation (always important in live situations) and give more attack definition to the note.

**Snare.** The hands-down winner here is that old fave, the Shure SM-57. There's something about the response of this mic', with its presence peak (midrange boost) and proximity effect (low-end augmentation at close distance), that's a great match for the characteristic sound of a snare drum. And it's inexpensive, too. (I just love the fact that you can walk into a million-dollar studio and see a thousand-dollar snare being recorded with a hundred-dollar mic'!)

There are several variations of this basic design available from most of the major suppliers, and all of them will work fine. Also worth consideration are the newer generation of dynamic vocal mic's, such as the EV N-DYM series and the Shure Beta series. These will give you higher gain before feedback (not usually critical on drums, but important if they're occasionally going to do double duty as vocal mic's) as well as extended frequency response—although at a somewhat increased cost.

The snare mic' should be mounted on a boom or short stand placed away from the drummer—usually between the small rack tom and the hi-hats—and should look down at the drumhead at an angle from above the rim, at a distance of perhaps an inch off the head itself.

**Toms.** The same mic's recommended for the snare will work fine on toms, and if you have them, by all means use them. However, the characteristic of a tom is somewhere between that of a snare and that of a kick (toms generate more low frequencies than snares), and mic's are available that can help you get a bigger, warmer sound. The Sennheiser 421 is a popular choice, as is the Beyer 420. For large toms

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(16-18"), I prefer a mic' of the type recommended for kick drums.

Mic' placement on toms is similar to that of the snare—with a couple of exceptions. If you're miking toms without bottom heads, you can place the mic' inside from the bottom. This will give you better isolation and get one more piece of hardware out of your way when you're playing. Also, if you have two toms mounted next to each other, you can mike them with a single mic'. Place it above the point where the drums are almost touching, looking down at a 45° angle a couple of inches from the drums. (My current setup has four mounted toms that I usually mike in this fashion using two mic's. It sounds good, it simplifies the mix, and it saves two mic's, too!)

**Cymbals.** In moderate-sized rooms where you're miking your drums more for tone than volume, you can get away without running any overhead mic's, because the cymbals will tend to cut through the mix enough on their own to give a pleasing balance out front. (You'll probably get a little bleed from the tom mic's anyway.) Large venues, of course, are a different story.

Once again, if you're limited to dynamic mic's, they will suffice within certain constraints, but they're not optimum for this application. The best solution is the small-diaphragm condenser, noted for its quick transients and extended high frequency response—so important to the accurate reproduction of cymbals. I'm partial to the Audio Technica line (ATM 33R/4031/4051, etc.) for providing very good sound at a reasonable cost. Shure condensers (SM-81, SM-85) are very popular for this use, as are any of the small-diaphragm condensers from AKG.

If you're only going to run one cymbal mic', simply hang it over the center of the kit where it'll have the best chance of picking everything up. If you've got two, suspend one over each side of the kit to pick up more cymbals and less toms. (If for some strange reason you're concerned about proper stereo imaging in a live situation, you can use the coincident-pair

method described in *MD*'s August '94 *In The Studio*)

It's nice—but not absolutely necessary—to have a separate mic' for the hi-hat. Use the same type of mic' as discussed above, placed above the hats and looking down at an angle approximately 6" from the top cymbal. Another option for hi-hats is the *Hot Hi-Hat* from K&K. Basically a very small condenser mounted on an integral gooseneck that attaches to the hi-hat stand, this looks to be a very well-designed system for miking your hats. I haven't auditioned one yet, but I've heard very good things about them.

### Perspective

Okay, we've covered a whole slew of miking options, and by now you might be thinking that the whole procedure is just going to be too complicated and/or expensive to bother with. Well, it doesn't have to be that way. Sure, there's a lot of very nice equipment available for you to spend your hard-earned money on, but you don't have to take out a second mortgage to begin putting out a professional sound.

The bottom line is that the drummer on a budget with a five-piece kit can fill the average club with a very professional sound using four relatively inexpensive dynamic mic's (perhaps purchased used for even greater savings) by running one on the kick, one on the snare, one on the floor tom, and letting the rack toms share one. More important than the exact number or type of mic's you use is *how* you use them within the context of your band, which is what we'll cover next.

### In Use

When you make the decision to begin miking your drums, *do not* think, "Well, we've got a big gig tonight, so I think I'll bring a bunch of mic's and really wow 'em with my killer drum sound." This is sonic suicide, akin to learning how to drive on the L.A. freeway during rush hour.

We learn to drive in a vacant parking lot or empty field, and we learn to reinforce

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drums in our rehearsal space (or an empty building if the rehearsal room is too small. For me it was a vacant warehouse.) Start by setting up your drums as you normally do. Then place the mic' stands around them, out of your way but still able to reach the drums. You shouldn't have to make any concessions in playing comfort to accommodate the mic's.

A big help here is the use of boom stands, goosenecks, and shorter-than-average straight stands; these should enable you to keep things out of your way. Of course you're still going to have to deal with the mic's themselves, but they should be on the side of the drum away from the drummer and should only intrude on the playing surface an inch or two. (I find it interesting that while "house" mic's get smacked fairly often, drummers will rarely—if ever—hit their own mic's!)

We don't have room for a detailed

analysis of the proper equalization for each drum (see August's *In The Studio* for a discussion of this subject), but here are some basic guidelines: We're looking for a defined stick attack (found in the higher frequency regions) followed by a nice warm sustain (mid-bass). If the tone is too "boxy" we can pull out some mids, making it sound punchier.

Once you've got your basic sound happening, it's time to bring in the rest of the band and fine-tune the mix. Unless you have a dedicated sound tech, there are two ways to proceed. The first is to have another bandmember use a wireless rig or long cord and stand out front and listen, making adjustments as he or she sees fit. The alternate method is to have another drummer play along with your band as you go out front and listen. This is probably the best way (especially if the other drummer can play in a style similar to yours),

because who knows more about how your drums should sound than you? (Even if another drummer isn't available, I always have a bandmember get on my drums and hit each piece while I listen carefully for volume inconsistencies or eq problems. Then I have him play a basic beat while I listen to the overall tone and balance of the kit as a whole.)

Another thing to consider is feeding drums into the monitors. I've always craved lots of kick drum in my monitor. I never really knew why until recently, when I heard Billy Cobham say in an instructional video that when he could clearly hear his kick drums in a performance situation, he could play intricate and subtle patterns, and when he *couldn't* hear them he had to play much more simply. This makes sense, because the brain usually needs feedback to make sure it's getting the right message across to the

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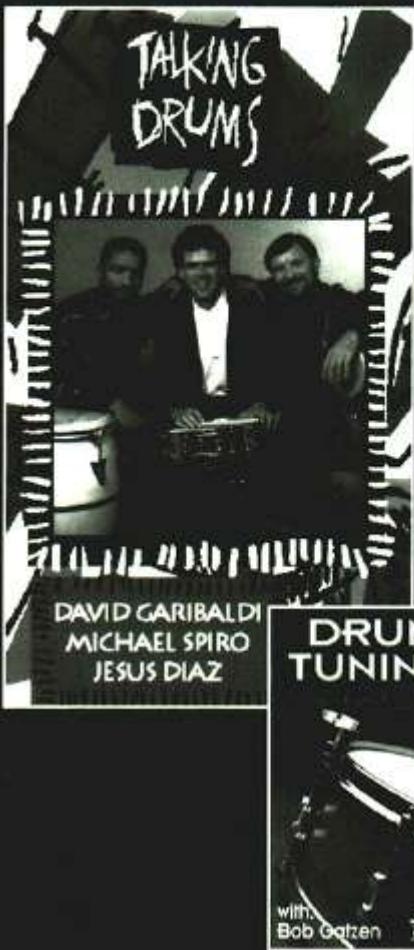
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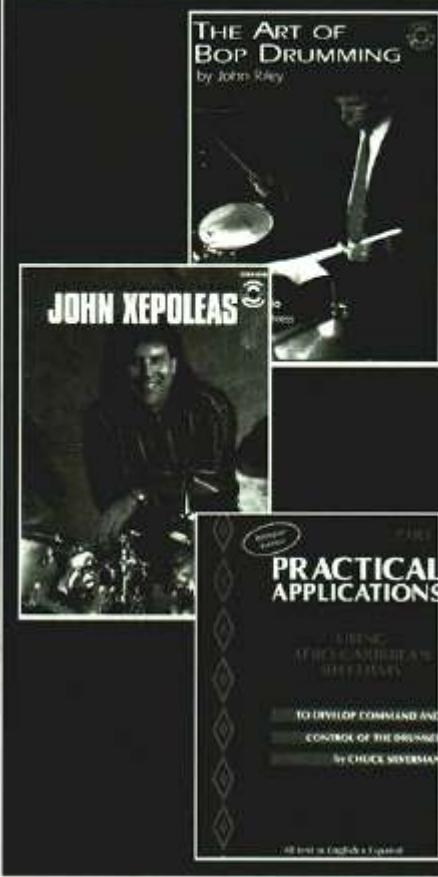
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body. Additionally, running some kick and snare in everyone's monitor will help lock the band together.

At this point your "dress rehearsal" soundcheck is done. Now carefully note all the settings on your mixer pertaining to the drums, and write them down. (Knobs have a way of twisting themselves when no one's looking.) Yes, things will sound different at whatever venue you're playing, but this will give you a close approximation that you can quickly fine-tune during your soundcheck at the venue.

Once at the club you'll also want to make a decision about effects. Depending on the room, you may want to add a little reverb to the snare and toms (you almost certainly will when playing outdoors), but you have to take each room on a case-by-case basis. It's also very helpful if you can assign all the drum faders to a submix on the mixer so that you can easily raise or lower the entire kit without affecting the

relative level of each piece. Then once or twice during the evening (especially after the room has filled with people, changing the acoustics), someone can go into the crowd with a wireless rig and quickly assess and correct any imbalances.

I realize all this seems like a bit of work, but after a few gigs you'll become very adept at getting a good sound very quickly (after all, your band does this every night for vocals, right?), and your entire band will sound much more professional. And now, when it's Saturday night and your drums are really happening for you, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that they're also sounding great to your audience!

The author would like to thank Joe Quealy of Cal Central Pro Light & Sound and Brian Stanley of the Music Factory.



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## RECORDINGS

## DAVID TORN, MICK KARN, TERRY BOZZIO

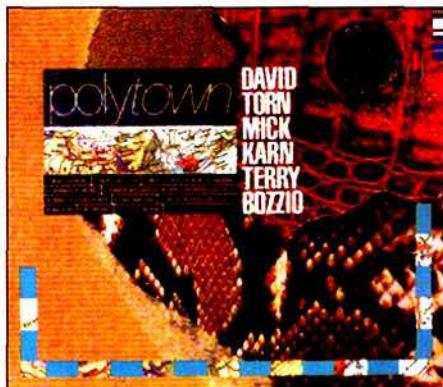
Polytown  
(CMP CD 1006)  
∅ ∅ ∅ ∅ ½

David Torn: gtr, kybd  
Mick Karn: bs, bs clar  
Terry Bozzio: dr, perc

All that fun and heavy stuff you've seen Terry Bozzio do in his clinics, on his videos, and at MD's Festival last year—the independence, the dexterity, the imagination, the *music*—can be found on *Polytown* in a context that it was seemingly meant for: instrumental, otherworldly, seductively mutating collaborations with two of Terry's closest and most creative musical allies.

"Collaboration" is the key word. Torn, Karn, and Bozzio obviously respect each

other's playing, but, more importantly, they respect the possibilities and power of the music. For his part, Terry's atypical patterns are more orchestrations than beats; if you listen real close, you can almost imagine him deciding on the perfect parts, then worrying about how he's going to play them later. When it does come time for him to perform, it's almost like you're hearing several players at once—not just because of the independence involved, but because each limb is furthering the cause of the tune in its own vital way. And don't get the idea that these are cold and calculated mind-and-



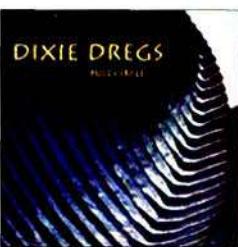
limb exercises: There's a lot of soul in these pieces, and Terry infuses much life, groove, and playfulness throughout each of them.

A truly inspiring recording.  
• Adam Budofsky

## DIXIE DREGS

Full Circle  
(Capricorn 4-42021)

∅ ∅ ∅ ∅



Steve Morse: gtr  
Rod Morgenstein: dr  
Dave LaRue: bs  
T Lavitz: kybd  
Jerry Goodman: vln

This is slightly more grounded, in-the-groove Dregs, but with that same frenzied, eclectic, unpredictable style that won them a sizable cult following among progressive rockers in the late '70s. Guitarist Steve Morse has come up with a winning combination of new tunes—all in keeping with Dregs history, but fresh and crisp.

Morgenstein sounds like he relished this date. The Dregs' "live" recording from last year was a teaser in comparison—on *Full Circle* they have come back all the way, and then

some. The boys are playing hard and well again; this may be the best-recorded Dregs album yet. Morgenstein sells "Goin' To Town" with a sly country sock, and takes the rocking "Calcutta" out with some clearly agitated stick-work and double bass drums. (He and bassist LaRue put a nasty crunching spin on the latter track and blow through a very acceptable cover of the great "Shapes Of Things.")

Original Dixie Dregs albums could be hard to find. Happily, *Full Circle* is more than a good re-creation of this great Southern Fried fusion band's best material.

• Robin Tolleson

## BOBBY PREVITE'S EMPTY SUITS

Slay The Suitors  
(Avant/DIW AVAN 036)

∅ ∅ ∅ ½



Bobby Previte: dr  
Roger Squitero: perc  
Robin Eubanks: tbn  
Jerome Harris: gtr, bs  
Wayne Horvitz,  
Steve Gadoury: kybd

Ever the adventurous drummer/composer, Mr. Previte once again ventures the road not taken. And for this gifted leader, risking the road matters more than reaching the destination. The long-unfolding compositions—most clocking in between thirteen and sixteen minutes—are not for passive listeners. But tuned-in buffs will be rewarded with engaging twists and turns. The focus is on collective improvisation rather than a soloist/support group relationship. Despite all the freedom and ominous overlapping textures, there's no clashing; everyone's on a wavelength here.

As a composer as well as a drummer, Previte excels in lively, unusual coloration. His intense, edgy drumming is often more concerned with driving the energy and shape of the composition than with sketching literal time outlines, except on cuts like "Waltz," where he wails away on some urgent jazz-funk. It's unpre-

dictable fare: Imagine an impressionist composing chamber music for a Lower East Side acid jazz ensemble. It's trippy stuff, but firmly focused.

• Jeff Potter

## ARSON GARDEN

The Belle Stomp  
(American Empire 4992-53894-2)

∅ ∅ ∅ ∅



April Combs: vcl  
Clark Starr: bs  
Joby Barnett: dr  
James Combs: gtr, vcl  
Michael Mann: gtr

Bloomington, Indiana gives birth to rising stars and bona fide talents in Arson Garden and drummer Joby Barnett, who fuse rock, swing, and folk stylings into one of the most infectious debuts of the year.

Underneath Combs' sweet, X-styled vocals is a driving core of confident musicians

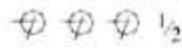
who use dynamics, well-timed accents, and odd time signatures to remove their songs from the normal pop-song fare. Much of the music is rooted in 6/8 time, but with Barnett's fresh approach, all of it comes off current.

As Jimmy Chamberlin does with Smashing Pumpkins, Barnett stamps his signature with ghosting, a busy left hand, a jazzy ride hand, liberal tom strolls, and out-of-nowhere snare shots. One highlight is "Pretty Solvent," where Barnett beautifully weaves bars of 5/8 and 6/8 in the verse. But there are no duds on this record, which is just one of four great releases from this new label; check out the bands Flycatcher, Sons of Elvis, and Dieselmeat. (*American Empire Records*, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012)

• Matt Peiken

### STEVE TIBBETTS

The Fall Of Us All  
(ECM 1527 78118-21527-2)



Steve Tibbetts: gtr, perc  
Marc Anderson: perc  
Marcus Wise: tabla  
Jim Anton, Eric Andersen: bs  
Mike Olson: synth, Linn

Minneapolis guitarist-composer Steve Tibbetts unleashes an aural avalanche that is heavy and dense with live,

sequenced, sampled, and looped percussion. Tibbetts is one of four percussionists listed in the credits—at times it sounds like armies.

On "Nyemma," Marc Anderson, Marcus Wise, and Tibbetts, along with Linn programmer Mike Olson, effectively drum up the beautifully rhythmic rumbling of a stampede. On the next track, "Formless," they are almost completely free. "Fade Away" features acoustic guitar, and the percussion that moves it along is as sensitive and breathy as it is rambunctious on the marathon opening track, "Dzogchen Punks." The percussion sounds are an ear-fetching blend of well-recorded acoustic hand drums, deep toms, and hearty cymbals, along with more mysterious electronic swishes, clanks, and thunks. "Full Moon Dogs" is played beautifully in a sort of Far East Phil Collins groove, then Tibbetts' distorted guitar explodes in waves across the expanding percussion-scape.

An avid world traveler, it's apparent Tibbetts has absorbed an interesting variety of musical sources—perhaps Jimi Hendrix, Glenn Branca, Bill Frisell, Robert Fripp—and yet the guitarist is truly an original. His encompassing arrangements, his sparse use of instrumentation along with two basses, and his heavy emphasis on percussion—with Anderson leading the way—all contribute to one of the year's best efforts.

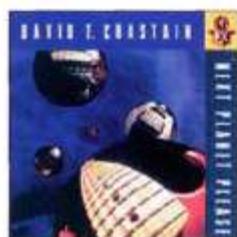
• Robin Tolleson

### SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

G. Love & Special Sauce's **JEFFREY CLEMENS** slings some saucy grooves on this band's self-titled cross between '70s-era Stones and Digable Planets (Okeh). Columbia Jazz Masterpieces has re-released **MAX ROACH**'s groundbreaking 1979 *M'Boom* percussion ensemble album. *Best Of Both Worlds*, a Rykodisc/Hannibal Records compilation, traverses contemporary world beat and unearths some gems. **JEFF STITLEY** plays with inventive coloration and feel on his melodic quartet's *Chameleon Eyes* (Lake Shore Jazz). **DAVE SAMUELS & DAVE LIEBMAN**'s wonderful live PAS performance is captured on the duo's recent Double Image release (DMP). **STEVE JORDAN**'s backbeats sound just like they should on *That's The Way It Should Be* by Booker T & the MG's.

### DAVID CHASTAIN

Next Planet Please  
(Leviathan 19941-2)



David Harbour: bs

Mike Haid: dr

David Chastain: gtr

When guitarist Joe Satriani broke into the Top-40 several years ago, it not only opened mainstream America to no-vocals rock music, it opened the gates for scores of would-be virtuosos to let their hands do the talking. This record is a perfect example, though, of why few of these artists are able to build successful careers.

While the concepts are strong, the drumming here appears to be an afterthought. (Chastain, by the way, produced the record.) The result is a soggy trio and flat-sounding disc that pushes the ear away. The string players express themselves well, but lack of attention to the drums and, particularly, how they sound, undermines their work. The group spent time learning its syncopated parts, but didn't tighten them.

Mike Haid proves he can groove on "Dunk The Funk" and shows off fine ghost-note and hi-hat control on "Fusion Delusion." The contemporary jazz of "Blame It On Rio" is another highlight. In this for-

mat, though, Haid can afford to stretch his imagination a bit more and spice up a record that could use a bit of seasoning.

(*Leviathan Records*, P.O. Box 39455, Cincinnati, OH 45239)

• Matt Peiken

### RONNIE BURRAGE

Shuttle  
(Sound Hills)



Ronnie Burrage: dr, kybd, perc, vcl  
Hamiet Bluiett: bar sx  
Cyrus Chestnut: pno  
Joe Ford: fl, sp sx, al sx  
Doc Gibbs: perc  
Frank "Ku-umba" Lacy: tbn, flghn  
Charnett Moffett: bs

Surrounding himself with serious jazz players (who perform on *Shuttle* with nimble chops and razor-sharp wit), Ronnie Burrage forces them to deal with ethereal melodies and aggressive Latin/free/bop arrangements, an unlikely setting for this East Coast lineup. Each tune builds as the drummer cranks up the steam and the musicians relate their strong personalities.

Burrage is a frenetic soloist, reminiscent of an awe-inspiring, neurotic Colaiuta. One minute he's as swing-sensitive as Jack DeJohnette, the next he's wailing as if the IRS are trying to seize his drums. On the title track, for instance, he pulls out all the stops, stretch-

### RATING SCALE

Perfect
Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor

ing odd-meter phrases across bar lines, displacing the groove, and edging Polyrhythms ahead with a jabbing bass drum.

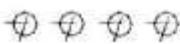
Too often, contemporary jazz records are as dull as white bread and bologna. *Shuttle* not only rises above that distasteful muck, it establishes Burrage as a fine musician, one who has been around jazz's unacknowledged outer edge for too long. (*Sphere Marketing, Cargo Bldg. 80, Room 2A, JFK Airport, Jamaica, NY 11430*)

• Ken Micallef

## VIDEOS

**DRUM TUNING:  
SOUND AND DESIGN  
WITH BOB GATZEN**  
(DCI Music Video/CPP Belwin)

\$24.95, 95 minutes



It's hard to imagine a guitar player getting very far with his career without knowing how to tune his instrument, but for a lot of drummers, tuning *their* instruments is a hit-or-miss operation. Bob Gatzen, who has designed products for Evans and Noble & Cooley, among other companies, demystifies drum tuning on this video by explaining the concepts behind drum design and how they affect the sound. His approach is refreshingly non-dogmatic, in that he explains different philosophies of drum making and the acoustic effects of each (e.g., this type of construction gives a bright sound, that type gives a darker sound).

Gatzen doesn't present a precise tuning system as such here, but rather explains how attack and sustain are affected by different ways of tuning so that drummers can come up with a tuning that will fit their style of playing and individual tastes. He deals separately with toms, snare drums, and bass drums, and also shows a "quick tune" method for finding a drum's optimum pitch for

resonance. The only drawback of presenting this topic on video is that many TV sets have lousy speakers that will not adequately reproduce the lower overtones of the drums. It is recommended that, if possible, the viewer use headphones to get the best sound quality. Other than that, this is a much-needed guide to a much-misunderstood subject.

• Rick Mattingly

## ARTHUR HULL

Guide To Endrumming  
(Interworld Music)  
\$39.95, 65 minutes  
includes 60-page booklet



Many of us drumset players wouldn't be caught dead banging on tambourines around a campfire on Earth Day. And drum circle leader Arthur Hull's *Guide To Endrumming* is certainly aimed more at Berkeley types than Berklee types. But that doesn't mean this tape isn't without its value for drumset players interested in hand drums.

Basic hand drum strokes are explained, and some useful exercises are presented in the accompanying booklet. And once you get beyond your prejudices, Hull's sincere (if unorthodox) attitude will most likely reaffirm the reasons you started playing drums in the first place: communication, power, camaraderie.

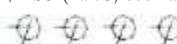
When you think about the fact that many of Hull's messages, like "being one with your instrument" and hitting "through" a drumhead rather than "at" it, have been suggested by top drumset teachers for years, you begin to see the connections between drumset and hand drums, rather than differences. New age? Maybe. Required viewing? Probably not. But don't let a little granola and forty bucks stand between you and this unique video. Split the cost with some buddies, and feed your head.

• Adam Budofsky

## BOOKS

### CHUCK SILVERMAN

Practical Applications Using Afro-Caribbean Rhythms, Parts 1,2, and 3  
(CPP Belwin)  
\$19.95 (Parts 1 and 2, book and cassette)  
\$24.95 (Part 3, book and CD)  
\$21.95 (Part 3, book and cassette)



It's obvious that Chuck Silverman loves being a teacher. There's loads of TLC behind this concise, information-packed three-part book/audio series. All three parts have plenty of challenging grooves and exercises, but the author never loses site of the key title word: "practical." If the student so wishes, he can tangle his limbs in knots with Latin-fusion independence exercises, but he can also walk away with lots of spicy ideas that are applicable to the next club/dance date (especially in *Parts 1* and *2*). Tips on Latin section-playing "etiquette" are also helpful, detailing which kit variations are best for avoiding clash when playing with percussionists.

*Part 1* focuses on traditional cha-cha, bolero, mambo, and merengue patterns followed by modern adaptations and exercises. *Part 2* employs the same format for cumbia, bossa nova, and samba. A section on solo and fill transcriptions from three influential timbale players is offered for kit application. *Part 3* covers 6/8 patterns and fills, Mozambique, and songo. A second section presents contemporary groove ideas and independence exercises. Audio examples cover the exercises, and play-alongs are included for stylistic segments.

Silverman's well-planned step-by-step method bears the mark of an experienced teacher who has road-tested his ideas on real students. The going gets tricky (especially in *Part 3*), but you'll handle the curves under this good teacher's guidance.

• Jeff Potter

### THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE LEEDY DRUM COMPANY

by Rob Cook  
(Centerstream/Hal Leonard)  
\$29.95



The only way a history of a drum company can be truly complete is if the company is no longer in business. Sad to say, that's the case with Leedy, which was one of the most important drum companies ever to exist. As this well-researched one hundred seventy-seven-page book proves, Leedy was on the cutting edge of drum and percussion innovation from the turn of the century through the 1940s. This was the company that invented the vibraphone; developed the "floating head" concept that is now standard on all drums; first covered drumshells with pearl and made snare drums with black-nickel plating (the *Black Beauty* look); constructed a seven-foot-diameter bass drum for Purdue that weighed five hundred pounds and had forty-eight tension rods; developed the *Broadway* snare drum with two sets of snares; and published *Leedy Drum Topics* (beginning in June, 1923), perhaps the first drum magazine.

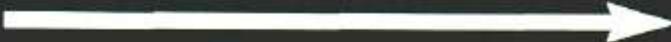
Cook provides plenty of behind-the-scenes information about the company, but the best part of the book is its reproductions of vintage Leedy catalogs and fliers in which you can see inventions that never caught on as well as ideas that have become standard practice. And if you think endorsements are a recent phenomenon, check out the Leedy ads featuring Billy Gladstone, Sonny Greer, the drummers from the Ringling Brothers circus, and Lawrence Welk's drummer.

*Complete...* is a fascinating look at the development of drums during the first half of this century.

• Rick Mattingly



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THE TIME IS RIGHT ...NOW

# Stomp

## The Rhythm Of Life...On Stage

by Jeff Potter

When baby first bangs a wooden spoon, the rascal knows he's on to something. It's a from-the-guts, attention-getting ode to chaos that chases away the monotony of the crib. Rhythm as release, mischievous and life-spirited. And if this impulse isn't squelched by adult humbugs, the little banger will graduate to a rattle, then pots and pans, and maybe, just maybe....

But you know that exhilaration, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this magazine. *Stomp*'s eight performers bring entire audiences along on such a cathartic joyride. Combining junk percussion, dance, "street" performance, and an almost vaudevillian visual humor, they have created an innovative non-verbal (except for a few closing lines) ninety-minute show that is delightful and invigorating.

As the show opens, a lone workman ambles on stage, toting his push broom. Eventually, long and short sweeping sounds suggest rhythms. Other sweepers enter one by one, acknowledging their fellows with greeting grunts that pepper the rhythms. Gradually, the labor force totals eight and the rhythms become more unified, intricate, and syncopated. Every portion of the brooms speak: wooden thuds, pole taps, bristles swishing and chattering. The groove becomes infectious as boots thud and click between broom licks. Layers of glorious percussion emerge until the textural whole is a "composition."

As the percussionists unite, fanning the sparks of rhythm, the mundane setting "transforms." What appeared bleak before now reveals endless opportunities for expression—a percussion pleasure dome. The audience is swept up in *Stomp*'s spoon-banging liberation as, in the course of the evening, they pull music from their own bodies and from discarded objects and rag-tag scraps mounted on the sets around them. Whirling and leaping, they flail at cans, jugs, dust bins, plastic pipes, and auto parts, then stomp thunderously about with huge oil drums strapped to their boots like defiant bad boys in Wonderland. Humble "found" objects become germs for ensemble pieces: a chamber group exploring the percussive possibilities of Zippo lighters...a jam with plastic and paper trash...a pandeiro-like trio for matchboxes. And yes, they do play the proverbial last-word fixtures: a hilarious trio for kitchen sinks.

*Stamp*'s roots began in the 1980s when co-directors Luke Creswell and Steve McNicholas livened the streets of Brighton, England with their performance group, Pookiesnackenburger. Their closing dust bin-and-brooms routine was a consistent crowd-



killer, inspiring Creswell to develop the percussion/movement concept into a complete show. With this goal in mind, he rounded up favorite colleagues with whom he had worked in various eccentric bands and performance groups. A few short-term ventures followed, including a Coke ad featuring a frenetic rhythm jam in an ice house and a sequence in Bette Midler's *Mondo Beyondo* film.

The troupe, featuring Creswell, Nick Dwyer, Sarah Eddy, Theseus Gerard, Fraser Morrison, David Olrod, Carl Smith, and Fiona Wilkes, premiered the full-length *Stomp* at the 1991 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Stints in Australia, Europe, Canada, and Hong Kong further sharpened their act. Then came an engagement at London's prestigious Sadler's Wells Theatre that earned two Olivier nominations (England's Tony Award equivalent). From there, the group crossed the pond in February of '94 for an open-ended run at New York's off-Broadway Orpheum Theater. Big Apple reviewers raved and Dave Letterman booked them for *Late Night*'s coveted guest-artist slot. New York will be fertile ground for the group in more ways than one: *Stomp*'s sounds expand with their travels as they search local trash bins for new finds.

Initially, Creswell developed the pieces. "But now," he explains, "everyone's versed in this 'language' of *Stomp*. Before, I was the only one who understood it. Now an idea can come from anyone." The athletic, gentle-faced Stomper has grown fond of his non-traditional instruments. "It's like painting in black and white and all of a sudden being given color.

"The good thing about junk percussion is that you're working quite hard to get 'melody' out of it," he goes on. "If you're playing a plastic shampoo container with the same technique that you would use playing a conga, you're working very hard to get any

tones out of the thing. Suddenly, you play a real conga and—wow—you've forgotten how different it is! When you're sticking on bits of metal, you've got hardly any bounce at all; you're fingering everything, working hard. Then you sit down to hit a drum and your hand bounces past your ear!" Fellow Stomper Carl Smith adds, "It was mutually inspirational for me to go from playing 'real instruments' to playing objects that I'm playing in *Stomp*: learning things from a dustpan and brush that can transfer to a set of congas, for example."

Creswell's learning experience on traditional percussion was to "literally grab sticks and go for it," so it only follows that "junk" playing should allow an open door for technique. "There's no right or wrong way to play dustpan and brush," he says. "There are no set rules. It's good when each person can find a different approach to technique. For instance, Fraser likes grunge—heavy music. When he sits at a kit his style is loud and aggressive. Carl is into Brazilian music—very sensitive and floating, with good touch. You've got two extreme players there. Give both of them dustpans and brushes and you *still* hear their different styles coming through."

Each of the earthy rhythmists has enriched *Stomp* with their diverse backgrounds. Fiona Wilkes, whose training was primarily in dance, approached her role with bold instinct: "I joined *Stomp* a bit later than the others. I felt that if I had a problem, I could *dance*

my way out of it—groove over it. *Stomp* looked a bit stiffer at that time. It was all drummers and I was the first so-called 'dancer.' I've learned from them and they've learned something from me.

"Now," Fiona smiles, "even though I don't use any 'real' sticks in the show, I classify myself as a *drummer*."

Drummer Theseus Gerard, a triathlete and rock climber, brought his brawny brand of athleticism to the group. In one muscular highlight, he and Creswell, suspended from their waists high up on scaffolding, swing in unison arcs as they play every object in sight, using the movement to shape the sound patterns.

The show's gritty look, sound, and energy has tempted reviewers to drop phrases like "post-punk." Dressed down in baggy workpants, grimy tank tops, and heavy black combat boots, the Stompers do look like rockers en route to a gig—or perhaps regular Joes leaving a lug 'n' lift nine-to-fiver. But the look has less to do with rock *vogue* rather than to say, "There's gonna be some sweaty, urban-din street energy going on here; this ain't Broadway." Remember, the name is "Stomp," not "Tap."

"*Stomp* was often categorized or compared to the performance art area," says Smith. "But it's not so concerted and—dare I say—pretentious. We didn't set out to be performance art." "Part of *Stomp*," says Creswell, "is that we like mucking about; we like having fun. So that should be in the show. Otherwise it might have become a little journey of 'what wonderful, masterful drummers

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we are.' We don't want to do the long boring drum solo that all the non-drummers walk out of. It doesn't interest us *at all*."

The artfully paced humor often lends "narrative" to the percussion. In one vignette, a pensive writer seeking quiet is surrounded by newspaper readers. The all-too-familiar irritating ambient sounds of paper-popping, rustling, coughs, and gutteral sounds snowball, building rhythm and volume until it escalates into a librarian's berserk nightmare.

Due to the show's success, the New York run will continue while the original cast kicks off a U.S. tour starting in Los Angeles this September. The big challenge: to find and train a new cast to master the unusual skills involved. Audition day surprised the Stompers with four hundred fifty eager hopefuls jamming the lobby and overflowing onto the sidewalk.

Creswell notes that there was plenty of talent present, but not all could cross over to the *Stomp* concept. "You could have somebody who is the best kit drummer in the world, a savage player resting on his throne with his legs and hands going. But once you make him stand, he has to shift weight in the body. You'd be surprised how many drummers can't do that."

Demonstrating some rapid-fire licks that alternate feet and hand-held poles, Creswell explains, "That's like doing double-bass drum licks. Since I'm standing up, people think, 'Oh, it's related to flamenco or tap dance.' But it's really more *drum* related."

"At the audition," says Smith, "there were the stereotypical dancers doing pirouettes and all of the official warm-ups. You could look at somebody approaching *Stomp* like that and virtually know, before you see what they're going to do, that they won't be appropriate." Referring to formal dance training, Wilkes adds, "It's not about 'first position' or 'pull-up'; it's more a sense of showing that you enjoy yourself and bringing across your own style."

Although *Stomp* offers an obvious appeal to drummers' ears—and many star players have been showing up at performances—the deft balance of visual drama and humor draws a wide audience: from body-piercing Lower East Siders to suburban children.

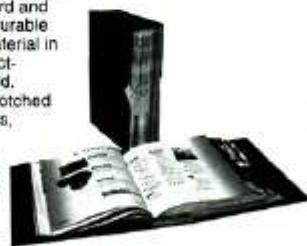
"We didn't design the show like that," says Creswell. "It began with a more underground audience—which I expected when it first started. Then they brought their kids and mums. We're lucky that a family audience can enjoy us. The other night we had a group of people going *mad* for the show, real ravers wanting to dance to everything, real clubbing mad people. Two rows behind them, an older guy in a suit with his blue-rinse wife was sitting there politely saying, 'Bravo!' I love it; I get off on that."

Creswell is pleased to report that the new Stomp recruits are doing quite well and bringing new influences with them. In the dimly lit rehearsal hall they stand in a circle, listening, observing, and mimicking master Luke's moves. Right stick, left stick, boot, pole-pole, brush. For now, it's tedious. But once they learn the *Stomp* "laneuacae," they'll be set free.



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### In Memoriam: Murray Spivack

Murray Spivack, one of drumming's most highly respected teachers, died on May 8th of this year following a lengthy illness.

Spivack was a successful theater and movie drummer in the 1930's and '40's. But it is for his five-decade career as a teacher that he is revered by literally thousands of drummers—including many of today's top drumming stars. His gruff, no-nonsense approach—focusing on the fundamental mechanics of drumming—could be daunting. But for those who stayed the course with Murray, the benefits were enormous. As several drummers put it, for technique and hand development, Murray Spivack was

In recognition of his contribution to drumming as an educator, Murray was chosen to receive *Modern Drummer's* Editor's Achievement Award in March of this year. In response to a plaque sent to Murray to commemorate his award, Murray's personal secretary, Monica Polkinghorn, informed us that "Murray was able to see and appreciate the plaque. It was the last acknowledgment he received, I thank you for him."

### Oliver Jackson

Oliver Jackson, a jazz drummer known for his deft touch and smooth swing, died May 29 in New York City. He was sixty-one.

Jackson began his career in Detroit, with such artists as Thad Jones and Tommy Flanagan. In 1949 he and drummer Eddie Locke joined forces, performing as Bop and Locke until 1953. At that point Jackson began performing with saxophonist Yusef Lateef.

A move to New York City in the 1950s saw a shift to the swing style for Jackson. He worked with Charlie Shavers, Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton and Kenny Burrell. As his career went on, he toured jazz clubs and festivals the world over with such artists as Earl Hines, Sy Oliver, and Oscar Peterson. His work earned him a win in the 1973 *Downbeat* critic's poll. He continued playing until the time of his death.

### Percussion Currents Festival

New Music Theatre of San Francisco will present the Percussion Currents Festival at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco on Labor Day weekend, September 2-4. The Festival will showcase artists who are exploring the intersection of world rhythms, experimental performance styles and techniques, and the electronic media. The program will include conceits, workshops, outdoor drum circles, and audience interaction. Featured artist on Friday, September 2

will be Zakir Hussain, master of North Indian percussion and pioneer in world-fusion. Other featured percussion artists and teachers will include Fredric Lieberman, Arthur Hull, Amy Knoles, and Dan Kennedy & Don Baker. The Festival will conclude on Sunday, September 4 with MIDI percussion band D'Cuckoo, who will lead an audience jam-along interactive dance party with over one hundred electronic percussion pads plugged into a four-channel sound system. For more information or to order advance tickets call the New Music Theatre at (415) 282-0924.

### Pearl Supports Rockin' Cops

The police department of Ocean City, Maryland is helping to bring a positive message to today's youth in the form of a rock band comprised entirely of law-enforcement officers from several agencies in the area. In support of



this program, the Pearl Drum Company recently presented the band with a *Session Elite* drumkit, including cymbals and hardware.

The band—called Code 3—will perform free of charge at schools and charitable organizations and will be funded entirely by public and private donations. According to Ocean City police chief David Massey, "We want to stress the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol, staying in school, resisting negative peer pressure, dealing with child abuse, and knowing that they can count on the police when they need them." Anyone interested in supporting this project may direct inquiries to Code 3, Community Support Project, Ocean City Police Dept., P.O. Box 2271, Ocean City, MD 21842.

### PAS Museum To Expand

Expansion of the Percussive Arts Society Museum in Lawton, Oklahoma will begin in October, thanks to a generous \$200,000 grant from The McMahon Foundation (also in Lawton) and an additional \$100,000 from PAS. The plan is to create an on-site, 2,000-square-foot instrument storage area and to increase the existing museum exhibit area by 2,000 square feet. A larger service drive and loading dock, a terrace, additional security lighting, and prominent signage are also included in the expansion plans.

"These additions will suit our needs now and in the foreseeable future," said PAS president Garwood Whaley. "We are very grateful to the McMahon Foundation for their generosity, and we are particularly happy that we can accomplish this project without additional fund-raising."

# Zildjian Inner City School Percussion Clinic



(Left to right:) Mitch Cohen, Lennie DiMuzio, Ed Uribe, Craigie Zildjian, and Colin Schofield

The Zildjian company recently conducted the first of what it hopes will be a continuing series of percussion clinics for inner city schools. The inaugural clinic took place at the Roland Hayes School

of Music at Madison Park High School in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and featured a performance by leading drummer/educator Ed Uribe and a band Ed put together specially for the event. Also performing was the school's own percussion ensemble, under the direction of Mitch Cohen, school percussion director and coordinator of the event.

"We hope that these clinics will help to motivate students and stimulate and expand their interest in music," said Lennie DiMuzio, Zildjian's director of Education. "We are committed to the support of music education in our schools at every level." Craigie Zildjian, vice president of the company, added, "This was a meaningful way for us to give something back to the local community. All the students were so appreciative; we're hoping to do more in the future."

## Endorser News

Billy Johnson (Bad Boy) and Eric Staffa (Rhoads & Craven) are playing Trick snare drums.

New Pearl endorsers include Jim Capaldi (Traffic), Scott Collier (Brother Cane), Mark Poland (Damn The Machine), Jerry Gaskill (King's X), Mitch Dorge (Crash Test Dummies), Graham Hopkins (My Little Funhouse), Anthony Smedile (Dig), Kenneth Blevins (Shawn Colvin, John Hiatt), Roger Murdock (King Missile), Tim Chewning (John Michael Montgomery), Victor Bisetti and Louis Perez (Los Lobos), Sherrie Maricle (NY Pops), Charlie Pruitt (Allgood), and Trey Gray (FaithHill).

Now using PureCussion RIMS and related products are Frank Beard, Frank Bellucci, Tal Bergman, Paul Bostaph, Jeff Campitelli, Jim Christie, Larry Crockett, Eddie Collins, Eddie Dominguez, Robert Eberling, Marcus Farney, James Gadson, Richie Garcia, Toni Gatling, George Lawrence, Toss Panos, Ricky Parent, Shawn Pelton, Tim Pope, Tom Roady, Kevin Wilkins, and Brad Wilk.

Billy Cobham endorses PureCussion equipment, as well as Tough Traveler's Drumslinger percussion bags.

Ramon Yslas, (Shadowfax) is now an LP endorser.

Yamaha welcomes Pacific Northwest percussionist Alan Keown as an artist/educator.

Kenny Aronoff, Marvin Kanarek, Dave Weckl, and Charlie Adams are endorsing Fishman Transducers.

Pro-Mark's artist roster now includes Carter Beauford (Dave Matthews Band), Robert Aguilar (La Mafia), Jerry Gaskill (King's X), Chad Gracey (Live), Ivan Hampden (Luther Vandross), Jack Irons (Eleven), Eric Kretz (Stone Temple Pilots), Nick Mason (Pink Floyd), T.S. Monk, Jason Patterson (Cry Of Love), Chuck Teece (Bad Brains), Brad Roberts (GWAR), Crystal Taliefero (Billy Joel), Karma Auger, Tommy Beavers (Asleep At The Wheel), Carol Es (The Extinct), Joe Frenchwood (Sunset Heights), Georgia Hubley (Yo La Tengo), Johnny Kick (Madder Rose), Denny McDermott (Marc Cohn), Josh Sinder (TAB), Eddie Dominguez (FAMA), and Bob Martin (Green Apple Quick Step).

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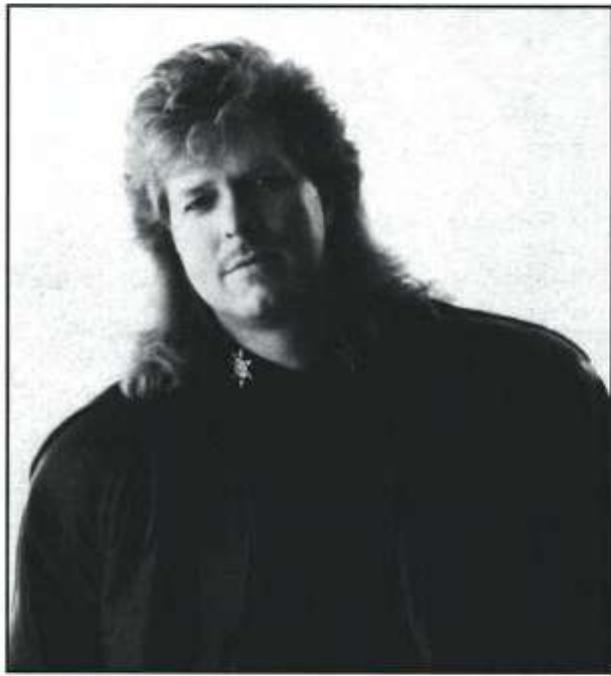
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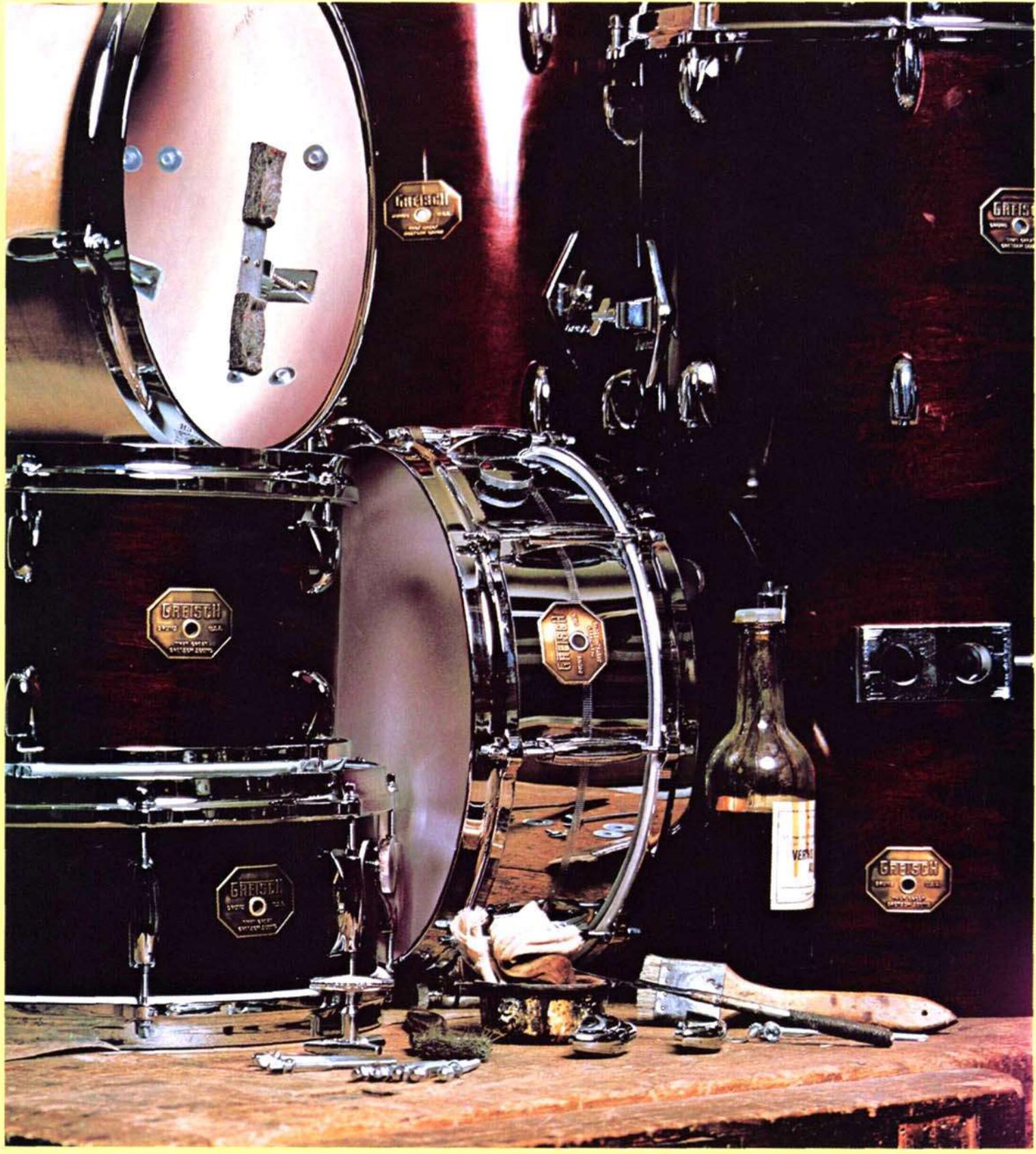
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